

THE
COMPLETE WORKS
OF
JOHN M. MASON, D.D.
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IN
FOUR VOLUMES.

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N A T U R E
AND
NECESSITY OF REGENERATION.

SERMON IV.

NATURE AND NECESSITY OF REGENERATION.

JOHN III. 5.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

IN the preceding part of the chapter, our Lord had inculcated upon Nicodemus the absolute necessity of a *new birth*, in order to a sinful man's even perceiving the kingdom of God. The candid Pharisee, to whom such a doctrine appeared as uncouth, incredible, and absurd, as it does at this day, to many who call themselves enlightened Christians, expressed his astonishment, as if the Redeemer had uttered a physical

contradiction ; *How can a man be born when he is OLD ? can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born ?* Without stopping to notice the grossness of his conceptions, our Lord Jesus, with the majesty of a teacher sent from God, repeats his assertion with a slight variation in the form, which might lead Nicodemus to some general idea of his meaning : *Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a man be born of WATER and of the SPIRIT, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.*

The "kingdom of God," means that gracious establishment in our world, of which he is the author ; which derives all its principles and efficiency from him, of which the design is to destroy the works of the devil, and bring back with increased beauty, the order originally set up ; in a word, to make such a display of his righteousness, truth, grace, and love, in and towards our rebel world, as should command the admiration of all holy beings, and be an eternal exhibition, in all places of his dominion, of the perfection of his government.

This "kingdom of God," so stupendous in its effects, is yet so pure and spiritual in its process, as to be invisible not merely to eyes of flesh and blood, but even to the eyes of intellect in corrupted man, until they have undergone a renovation, and have received a power suited to the nature of the objects which they are called to

contemplate *Except a man be born again, he cannot SEE the kingdom of God.*

If such a change is necessary to just perceptions of that kingdom, how much more clearly is it necessary to become its subject, to enjoy its privileges, and share in its rewards! So necessary, lay it well to your hearts, that the eternal truth has pronounced, *Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, i.e. of the purifying Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.*

As the doctrine is laid down from the lips of Jesus himself, it is an individual concern, and should strike us with a sacred horror, lest, after all our professions of the truth, our standing in the house of God, and our hopes of heaven, we should be found destitute of that qualification without which he has declared that not a man of us shall enter into the kingdom of God.

Let us, then, as we do not wish to deceive our own souls, and sink down to hell in the full sight of heaven, investigate more narrowly what it is to be born again, and whence the indisputable necessity arises to enter into the kingdom of God.

When a human being is born, he is introduced into a world of which it is not possible he should have any previous conception. He exists by a new medium, and by new means. His growth proceeds in a new manner—his faculties experience a new development—he acquires new

relations and tastes, relishes preferences, pleasures, pursuits, adapted to and growing out of his new state of existence. *Old things, literally, are passed away, and all things are become new.* Were he remanded back to his first mode of life he would immediately expire, because it contains no provision for the perpetuity of that life which belongs to his new and improved state.

In natural things all this is undeniable; and as our Lord has employed the figure of a *birth*, by calling it a being *born again*, to shadow forth that change which passes upon a sinner when he “enters into the kingdom of God,” there must be a resemblance between them. The figure must correspond, in its essential points, with the the thing figured, or it is no illustration of the subject. The natural must represent the spiritual birth. The entrance into this world by being born, an entrance into the kingdom of God by being born again, or our Lord’s solemn and impressive language, gives us no assistance in forming any just ideas of the change which he asserts to be necessary. We may, therefore, without pushing the analogy of natural and spiritual things to an indiscreet length, safely maintain that our Lord holds up an introduction into the kingdom of God, as an entrance upon a new state of being, involving a thorough change of perceptions, feelings, and habits; so that *if any man be in*

Christ Jesus, he is a new creature ; and with him old things are passed away ; behold, all things are become new.

1. Man, by his new birth, enters into the kingdom of God as a kingdom of *light*.

There is no figure in the scripture more commonly used to depict the difference between our old state of nature and our new one by grace, than the opposition between light and darkness. Christians were *once darkness, but are now light in the Lord. God hath called them out of darkness into his marvelous light. They that follow after Jesus Christ shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. The eyes of their understanding being opened, they see wondrous things in God's law, and see them most clearly where they least expected to find them. They see the light of the knowledge of God shining in the person of Jesus Christ, and that it cannot possibly shine anywhere else, to refresh, and console, and invigorate the sinner. They see that Christ Jesus, who was to them not only without form or comeliness, but even a stone of stumbling and rock of offence, is the perfection of beauty, the very brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person—is the corner-stone, elect, precious, which God hath laid in Zion, as the sure and only foundation, upon which, whosoever believeth, shall not be ashamed. They see*

the most divine consistency and excellence in that which was formerly incomprehensible and contradictory to their mind; the union of truth and mercy, of righteousness and peace, of redemption by the blood of Jesus, and the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace; so that the just God is the Savior. They see that this way of salvation and no other *became him for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory*; and that it is infinitely impossible they should be deceived in trusting it. *I know*, says an assured believer, *I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against THAT DAY.* They see that sin is folly, and the wages of sin death—that the cup of sinful gratification, in which they formerly took pleasure, is charged with poison, and was actually working their destruction. They see that wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness, and her paths the only ones that "lead to glory and to God." They see, in an inverted order and proportion, the things of time and sense, and the things which are eternal—in one word, they see what they never saw before, *the kingdom of God!*

2. When a man enters into the kingdom of God, he exists by a *new medium*.

This new medium is the Spirit of God in his gracious influence. He is universally the *Spirit of life*. In him we live, and move, and have our being. All the created life in the universe is from him. But he dispenses it agreeably to the nature of the constitution under which he acts. The vegetable, animal, and intellectual worlds have their lives such as the Spirit of God gives them for the purposes they are intended to answer. It is no otherwise in the world of grace, the kingdom of God. There too *it is the Spirit that quickeneth, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit*. He bestows and maintains a life answerable to the part which the saved sinner has to perform, the affections he is to cherish, the blessedness he is to enjoy, the glory which awaits him. As one who is made alive unto God, not a faculty of the new man is unfolded, not a function exercised, not a motion performed, but by the Spirit of God. His very faith, the elementary principle of his life, is from the Holy Spirit; so that *he lives by the Spirit, he walks by the Spirit, he is led by the Spirit*. By the Spirit the Christian mortifies the deeds of the body; he brings forth fruit unto God; he cultivates his love, enjoys his fellowship, is *spiritually minded*. All this is manifestly a *new* life, infinitely removed from any merely intellectual attainment, however refined or exalted. A life for

which earth has no atmosphere, and which can exist nowhere but *in the kingdom of God*.

3. He who is born again lives by new *means*.

These are the word, the ordinances, and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. No sooner is the babe of grace born into the kingdom of God, than he cries for the *sincere milk of the word*. The speculations of men, and their discoveries, even of truth, however elegant or lofty, are at best but “dry breasts;” they afford no nutriment to his soul, nor can satisfy the cravings of his appetite; and in every after stage of his existence, it is the bread of God which came down from heaven—it is the meat which endureth to everlasting life—that can either fulfil his desires, or refresh and invigorate his frame. Then the word of God is found of him, and he eats it, and it is unto him *the joy and the rejoicing of his heart*. *The judgments of the Lord are, to his taste, sweeter than the honey and the honey-comb*. In the ordinances of Christ he finds those green pastures and those gently flowing waters which delighted the psalmist and equally delight him. These ordinances are thus precious and powerful, because they are channels through which the Redeemer’s grace pours into his heart. Christ himself is his life. *His flesh is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed*. His words are verified in a believer’s experience. *He that eateth me, even he shall live by me. So that the life*

which he now lives in the flesh is by the faith of the Son of God. Thus fed and nourished, and filled with the fulness of God, he grows in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, until that which is perfect is come, and he is admitted into his presence with exceeding joy.

4. In consequence of his *new birth*, his faculties acquire a new development.

The eyes of his understanding are enlightened, so that he perceives what is *the hope of the calling of God, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.* As a *natural man* he received not the things of the Spirit of God, because they were foolishness unto him. But being born of the Spirit, he has *spiritual discernment*, so that what things were foolishness to him appear to be *the wisdom of God, and the power of God to his salvation.*

His will, which before was all enmity, is now made pliant and ductile to the will of God. It is the rule and reason of his duties and of his submission. Show a Christian that what he is called to do or to endure is agreeable to the will of his heavenly Father, and you do infinitely more to nerve his resolution or to calm his spirit—to render him courageous, inflexible, persevering, or to soften or subdue his soul—to repress every rising murmur and bend his mind

into meek and cordial acquiescence—than by a thousand arguments drawn from the necessity of the case, from the dignity of virtue, from the fitness of things, from the good of the universe, or any of those sterile topics which ignorance addresses to vanity. It is the will of God! forms a short summary of a regenerated man's ethics, and disposes of all the objections of flesh and blood, and sinful appetite, and earthly decencies, interests, and passions, with a celerity somewhat proportioned to the majesty of Him who has spoken. In short, *to do the will of God from the heart* is the perfection after which the new man habitually aspires.

The *affections* also undergo a renovation. Once they were *set on things on the earth*; the love of this present world occupied and filled their hearts with *the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life*. But being born again, they are taught to *set their affections on things above, where Jesus Christ sitteth at the right hand of God*. Disregard and despise the good gifts of God's providence they do not, they cannot. They are the only people on earth who know how to assign them their proper places; to use them according to the intention of the blessed Giver, and to be unfeignedly thankful for them. Gratitude to God is a conspicuous feature on the face of the new man; it forms a

family likeness, by which the members are identified. *Be ye thankful* is a precept which none but a Christian obeys. But when the question is concerning their supreme and ultimate preference, the soul of a believer fastens upon other objects, and he values the things of this transitory life, whatever they may be, quite as low as, when viewed in their proper relations of the gift of God, he values them highly. *What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ; yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord.* The principle of love, which has its perfect reign in the kingdom of God, and binds together the society of holy beings, is *shed abroad in his heart*. He loves the Lord Jesus, the Redeemer, tenderly, intensely, fervently. He joins, without a qualification, in that sacred curse of the apostle, *If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maran-atha*. He loves the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ as the original fountain of all saving mercies, and can, from his inmost soul, re-echo that benediction of Peter, *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who of his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a living hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead*. He loves that Holy Spirit, the Comforter, the Advocate, who comes as the representative

of the risen Savior, to dwell in them, to abide with them forever, as the Spirit of holiness, as the Spirit of grace and supplication, to make the petitions of their breast a counterpart of the intercessions within the veil. An argument drawn from the *love of the Spirit* touches every spring of ingenuous emotion within him. How can he but love, with his purest affections, that gracious Friend, who was deputed by his glorified Lord to woo him and win him to blessedness and God; to take possession of him in the Conqueror's name; to put the seal of heaven upon his forehead; to subdue and finally to slay all the enemies of his own peace and of his Master's glory, and in the mean time as *the Holy Spirit of promise*, to be in him *the earnest of the purchased possession*, and to seal him up until the day of redemption.

Finally, he loves the children of God. *By this we know that we love God, when we love the children of God. Every one that loveth him that begat, loveth him that is begotten of him.* Formerly they were no more to him than kindred, business, or the common offices of humanity made them. Now there is a feeling of brotherhood, a community of interests, and instincts. He has a fellowship with them which is founded upon their *fellowship with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ*. All the children

of God are like him. They are *renewed* after his image; and one of the first effects of the Holy Spirit's agency is to draw the lines of that image deep and indelible. It has tints which speak the beauty and coloring of the skies. It is accompanied with the rudiments of that language which sounds barbarian in uncircumcised ears, but which is common and peculiar to renewed men, and is spoken perfectly and alone at the court of the great King. *Their speech bewrayeth them*, and marks a dignity, for which, were it possible, the monarchs of the world would do well and wisely to barter their crowns and kingdoms. They may be obscure and contemptible to outward view. Lazarus lies at your palace-door, perhaps, hated and disregarded. But he has a life-guard of a celestial Prince. Ministering spirits are in attendance, and wait for the signal to convey him away to the regions of light. You may perhaps see him there one day, when a drop of water to cool your tongue will be of more value to you than all that earthly grandeur which now pampers pride, and, it may be, shuts you out from the kingdom of God. But that *love of the brethren*, of which I speak, depends not upon external things. It looks to the image of God, which can send forth the rays of its glory through the poverty, and meanness, and misery, of earthly

ngs. It is not ashamed of those rags of which
 and himself is not ashamed, and which comport
 with a heavenly inheritance. O ye, who bear
 the image of the heavenly as ye have borne that
 of the earthly Adam, whatever be your condition
 here, I will call you my brothers, my sisters, by
 a dearer tie than ever bound flesh and blood
 together—the tie of the Savior's grace, of which
 the whole beauty and strength shall be reserved
 for our rapturous discovery in the kingdom of
 our Father!

Lastly, The regenerated sinner has new relations and tastes, preferences, pleasures, and pursuits, adapted to and growing out of his new state of existence.

1. He has new *relations*.

To God the Father. In his natural state, his relations were those of a rebellious creature under sentence of death. Now he is *reconciled to God by the death of his Son*. The sentence which was passed against him is reversed, and he stands adjudged to life, by a sentence which there is no power in the universe to cancel. *Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth!* His relations as a rebel are replaced by those of a dear child, and God is become to him a gracious and loving Father.

To God the Son, who has redeemed him by

his blood and subdued him by his grace to the obedience of the faith. He is accepted in the Beloved, who makes intercession for him; who is gone up on high to prepare a place for him, and shall show him, at last, among that ransomed family, of which he shines in the honors of the first-born.

To God the Holy Ghost. No longer to him the Spirit of the curse but of blessings manifold, who is now his companion, his guide, his protector—who shows him the path of life, and will be with him to the end, crowning him with ultimate and complete victory over all adversaries, and introducing him at last into the presence of the blessed One with exceeding joy.

To the divine law. Armed no longer with destructive penalty, but commissioned to be his preceptor, to guide his feet into the way of peace, that his path, being the path of the just, shall shine brighter and brighter unto the perfect day.

To the providence of God, which shall permit no ill to befall him—nothing which shall endanger his substantial interests—nothing which shall not promote his sanctification—working an increase of grace—producing the peaceable fruits of righteousness, and causing all things to co-operate for his final and perfect good.

To the holy angels, with whom he is united

into a new family under Christ the Head, who love him for the sake of his Elder Brother, and always behold the face of his Father in heaven, waiting to do him good, and glad to be employed at his command in acts of kindness to him as the heir of salvation.

2. Regenerated men have new tastes, preferences, and pleasures. For those things which were once their delight they have lost their relish. *They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts.* They taste that the Lord is gracious. They prefer the company and condition of fellow-heirs. Like Moses, they had *rather suffer affliction with the people of God, than enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt.* The Lord puts gladness into their hearts more than in the time when corn and wine, the best sensual joys, abound to the men of sin.

3. Regenerated men have entirely new pursuits.

Like other Gentiles they once walked in the vanity of their minds—committing iniquity with greediness—minding only the things of time and sense—neglecting, despising, hating whatsoever looked farther than the sphere of their purblind vision, and aimed at an inheritance beyond the grave. Now that their eyes are opened, and

their hearts changed, they cast their glance back with shame and horror, upon the practices and the perdition they have escaped.

God hath called them into the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ, and they *no longer run to the same excess of riot. They have chosen the better part, which shall not be taken from them.* They have cast in their lot with the strangers and pilgrims, who, though *in the world*, are not of it, but are marching through it to the place of their destination, to the land of the shining ones. *They seek a better country than earth, even a heavenly: therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he hath prepared for them a city.* With their eyes fastened on that city—the peace of God keeping their hearts and minds—and with the hope of seeing Jesus as he is, strong in their bosoms, they press toward the prize of their high calling, till, every duty fulfilled, every obstacle surmounted, every enemy vanquished, they are welcomed by the shout of the holy ones, into the presence of their Father.

Recollecting and comparing the remarks which have been made on the change, commonly called regeneration, or more scripturally, the “being born again,” you may form something like a just idea of those who *enter into the kingdom of God*—in other words, of *true Christians*. They are brought into a world where they see and discern

spiritual objects in a spiritual light. They exist by a new medium—the Spirit of God. Their life is maintained by new means—the divine word and ordinances. Their faculties undergo a new development—understanding, affections, will, all are directed to new and holy things; particularly a sanctified charity, exerting itself in love to God and man, rules in their hearts—and finally, they have new relations, tastes, preferences, pleasures, and pursuits—all marking a complete and radical change in the ruling principles of the soul.

This description of the new man rests not upon human fancy, but on the divine testimony: every part and portion of it being supported by clear scriptural authority, and comes to your consciences with *Thus saith the Lord*. I have not said that every believer is at all times an example of this character, in the whole variety, extent, and power of its graces; nor that he may not fall short, now in one and then in another. But I say that these graces, of their own nature, belong to that new life which the Holy Ghost implants in the new birth—that they are elements which enter into the composition of that new character which is more or less unfolded here, and shall be seen in all its proportions and perfections in the future life—I say that they all of them belong substantially to every

one who *enters the kingdom of God*. That he will study to be a living proof of their presence and prevalence—and that in fact they *are* expanded, *the seed of God* which contains them being gradually developed, in size, strength, and beauty, as the several circumstances of his lot render their proper exercise necessary. We are now to inquire,

II. Into the absolute necessity of such a change before a man can enter into the kingdom of God. It arises,

1. From the divine determination. Without it, says the Redeemer, *he cannot enter into the kingdom of God*. Be your religious connections ever so pure—your external privileges ever so great—your outward profession ever so decided—your moral conduct among men ever so exemplary—the question still remains, have you been *born again*? Without this all other advantages are nothing; all other recommendations are of no avail; *except a man be born*—lay it well to your hearts that there be no fatal mistake—*except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God*. Our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the eternal Truth, has settled this point beyond the possibility of reconsideration. Never hope that it may be reversed; that it may be revised; that some favorable judgment may be passed, which shall

admit you at last, however unqualified; for, in the

2. Place, this necessity arises from the *very nature of the case*.

For this purpose was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. Now the devil's principal work in our world is the apostasy and corruption of man. It is in the human soul that his abominable triumph is to be seen and felt. There he has effaced the glorious image of his Creator, and has drawn his own hideous likeness in its place. There he has entered in as a foul usurper; he makes the heart the citadel of his rebellion; and marshals under his command all the faculties and affections, to resist the authority of his rightful Sovereign. Can a man thus forsworn to his allegiance, thus allied to the prince of darkness, thus sharing with him in all the tempers and principles of his revolt; can a man thus circumstanced, suppose ye, be admitted into that kingdom which is set up for the annihilation of Satan's power, and supposes a renunciation of his cause, and a desertion of his standard, in every one who joins himself to Messiah the Prince, and becomes a loyal subject of the King of kings? Must not the thieves be expelled, and their den purified by celestial ablution—be converted into a temple of the living God!

Must not the faculties be restored to their original use, and ability imparted to perform the duties and to relish the pleasures of this new and sacred state? And as the kingdom of God here is preparatory to his kingdom hereafter, or rather is but a part of that same dispensation, shall any who are not qualified for the kingdom of glory be acknowledged as the real subjects of his grace? *Shall any thing that defileth, or that worketh abomination find a place, do ye imagine, in the regions of the just?* And shall a sinner, laden with guilt, steeped in pollution, his heart filled with enmity against the Holy One, and himself, at best, whatever be his appearance in the eyes of men, but an accomplice in the treasons of the pit; shall such an one find his way into the number of those *whom the Lord knoweth to be his*, and claim his place in the ante-chamber of the King's palace? The bosom of every sanctified one, of all who shall see the King in his glory, swells with abhorrence. The faces even of those who are yet strangers to the commonwealth of Israel, redden with shame at the impudence of the expectation; and every unseared conscience is appalled at the blasphemy. No, no, the thing is impossible! *Ye must be born again.* All the principles, affections, tastes, and habits, of your natural state, must be changed; a revolution, internal, holy,

complete, must be effected, or you bid an eternal adieu to the *kingdom of God*. It is a terrifying thought, a fearful utterance to be proclaimed in the ears of professed Christians, yet an utterance of imperious necessity, except ye be thus changed, except ye be washed, justified, sanctified by the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God, ye never see his kingdom—not a soul of you.

Allow me then, with all plainness and fidelity, to press this point, and to ask you, who pass in the world as Christians, do you know, from experience, what is this new birth, this transition from death unto life, without which the gates of the kingdom of God are barred against you here, and will be so forever hereafter? Do you know any thing about it? I do not mean what you can *say* about it. There are many who have been well instructed by *man*, on this as on other peculiar doctrines of the gospel, and who can make long, luminous, and eloquent dissertations on their abstract truth; yet never knew their grace, nor felt their power, nor set their foot in the *kingdom of God*. My friends, this is not enough. You may have abundance of intellectual light—as much speculative wisdom as the most distinguished spirit of the pit—you may believe the truths of this Bible upon conclusive external evidence—you may be exempla-

ry in your moral deportment toward your fellow-creatures—participate in all the outward privileges of the Christian church—be accounted a believer of high degree before mortal tribunals, and yet the renewing spirit of God have had nothing to do with you. *The world*, says the beloved John, *knoweth us not*. Is not the Christian character a riddle and a mystery, containing something which you cannot unravel? When he speaks of the blood of Jesus Christ *cleansing the conscience from dead works to serve the living God*—of that *peace which passeth all understanding*—of *setting his affections on things above*—of *looking for the blessed hope, the appearing of the great God our Savior*—does he not speak a foreign language? Are you not sensible there is something here which you do not understand? which has no counterpart in your soul? It is dreadfully ominous. There is every ground to fear that when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, you may prove destitute of the only thing which can entitle or qualify you to enter his heavenly kingdom—all your knowledge, gifts, profession, and privileges notwithstanding.

And is it so indeed? Must we admit the overwhelming thought, that many whom we knew in the flesh, whom we loved for their amiable properties, whom we hailed as brethren in the

common salvation, must at last sink down before our faces in bottomless perdition? Shall any pass from their seats in this sanctuary into the place of despair? O what a sweet relief to the foreboding heart, that still there is *hope*! It has not yet come to the dreadful extremity. O then, what shall we do to be saved? Who utters that agonizing cry? The way is but one, and it is short. *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou SHALT be saved. The mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.* There is no peradventure in the case. Thou SHALT be saved? O had I but that precious faith, this unbelief would not weigh me down, like a mill-stone of death. Go to *Jesus, the author and finisher of faith*, who has it to give, and who gives it freely. Go to him with your stony heart, with your death in *trespasses and sins*, and plead with him for the quickening Spirit. Never quit him till you get an answer of peace—throw yourself at his feet, and lie there where sinner never yet perished, till he be gracious unto you. He hath said, *Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.*

A word to the children of God, and I have done. Beloved, now are we the sons of God: Born of his Spirit, and introduced into his kingdom, *What manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness?* Exemplify the beauties, breathe the tempers, speak the lan-

guage, cherish the loftiness, of the kingdom. It is not for those who are of such high descent and such infinite expectations, to stoop to those toys which the children of earth mistake for riches, nor to defile themselves with the pollutions which they miscall pleasures. Keep unspotted that white robe in which you were clothed on the day of your new birth, the day of your espousals, and of the gladness of your heart. Know ye that the very angels of God can tell you, as the heirs of the kingdom, only by your *walking as Christ also walked?* It is the light of the divine image shining out in its brightness that renders your names visible in the catalogue of God's elect. Ponder much your obligations to the grace of the Lord Jesus, who loved you with an everlasting love—so loved you as to give *himself* an offering for you. The bitterness of Gethsemane and the anguish of Calvary, the rage of hell and the curse of God, could not shake his loving purpose, nor make him flinch from his resolution to save you. From the sentence of God's righteous law and the danger of eternal death—from the filth and power of your depravity—the service, the communion, and the recompense of the devil—he hath called you to a rank above the angels, and to all the blessedness of the kingdom of God. Oh! *We will remember thy love more than wine. To him that loved us,*

and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto his God and Father ; to him, with all affections, be glory and honor, dominion and power, forever and ever, amen !

WORKS
OF THE
FLESH AND SPIRIT
DISTINGUISHED.

S E R M O N V.

WORKS OF THE FLESH AND SPIRIT DISTINGUISHED.

JOHN III. 6.

That which is born of the flesh is FLESH ; and that which is born of the Spirit is SPIRIT.

THE doctrine of the *new birth*, which the prophet of the church has declared to be the original of all spiritual character, and all heavenly hope, and without which he has decided most peremptorily, a man *cannot enter into the kingdom of God*, sounds most uncouth in the ears of corrupted reason. It is so entirely out of the way of human wisdom—it contains a fact so utterly anomalous, or rather so repugnant to the known constitution of either physical or moral

nature, that even *masters in Israel* have pronounced the plain meaning of the terms in which it is proposed, to be absurd and fanatical, and have had recourse to a monstrous figure in order to make our Redeemer's language intelligible, and vindicate him from the charge of Puritanism. Men, to whom *the things of the Spirit of God* in their obvious construction are foolishness, love to take refuge in this system of *figuring*; and when they have so strained and altered the phraseology of the Bible as not to leave standing a syllable which savors of its sense, or from which you could by any possibility guess at its propositions, they please themselves with having made it speak a *rational* Christianity, when they have only destroyed every character which can alarm the guilty, or give peace to the alarmed. Thus it has fared with the doctrine of regeneration. The words of our Lord are so very simple and plain, that it requires some effort of ingenuity to mistake them. Yet they have not been able to escape. Criticism has laid her foul hands upon them, and by the aid of that machine called a figure, had at one time diluted them into baptism of water by the hands of a regularly ordained priest, and at another has made them typical of outward reformation, though always in such a form as to bespeak something clearly within the power of corrupted man, and

effectually to exclude the similitude of a *birth*. But it is so palpable as to need no proof that our Lord designates every effect produced by the agency of man *flesh*, and the effects produced by the agency of the Spirit of God *spirit*—that these effects are essentially contrasted—that they allow of no mixture, no concurrence, in the formation of the new birth—that they are, and necessarily must be, as different and opposite as flesh and spirit are—that alter, modify, refine, as much as you will, that which proceeds from the flesh, it is flesh still and nothing else, partaking exclusively of the nature of its author—so alter, modify, debase, if you can, that which proceeds from the Spirit of God, it is spirit still and nothing else, partaking exclusively of the nature of its blessed Author. He therefore denies that in this new birth there can be any co-partnership, co-operation, or concern whatever, of the power of man with the power of the Holy Spirit. They who become the subjects of it *are born, not of the flesh, nor of blood, nor of the will of man, but of God.*

Our unrenewed nature, with all its propensities and habits, acts and inclinations, the scripture emphatically terms *FLESH*; using it as equivalent with our *old man*—with the *body of sin*, which is to be *put off*, to be *crucified*, to be *destroyed*, but never to be amended. There is not

such an idea to be found in the whole Bible, nor any thing which contains a shadow of it, as that of *reforming* the works of the devil. The Lord performs his gracious work by creating a *new man in Christ Jesus*, not by repairing the *old man*. Yet it is a common and ruinous error for a sinner to imagine, that if he cannot do all that is requisite to insure the kingdom of heaven, he can do much. If he cannot completely renew his heart, and make himself meet for the inheritance of the saints in light, he can do a great deal—or if not a great deal, can do something towards forwarding this desirable work. So that the Spirit of God, though he may have a large or even principal share in the glory, shall not have it all; but he shall himself receive due credit for improving the opportunities he had. Without taking up your time in exposing the ignorance and arrogance of such a pretension, I shall briefly observe, that it finds its way into the heart of every unconverted man, and has wound its insidious coil so firmly around many hearers of the gospel, that nothing short of a divine deliverer can set them at liberty.

To counteract so pernicious but natural a mistake is the manifest design of the text. Hear it, professed disciple, and let it stir thee up to a rigorous examination of thy exercise and attain-

ments: *That which is born of the flesh is FLESH ; and that which is born of the Spirit is SPIRIT.*

Let me entreat you to accompany me through a short inquiry into those religious phenomena which, however specious, may rise no higher than corrupt nature, and wherein the work of the Spirit of God is to be distinguished from them.

I. Those religious phenomena to which corrupted nature is equal. *That which is born of the flesh is FLESH.*

1. Early impressions of serious things in a religious community.

Where a reverence of the gospel is established—where it pervades all the social habits, and especially where our own friends are under its influence—nothing is more natural or certain than that, under such circumstances, the religious feeling should become characteristic, and that many persons should imagine themselves to be true Christians, who know of no other power operating upon their minds than the power of imitation. How far this may be carried, it is impossible to tell, but it is lamentable to think how deep and how extensive are the delusions which accompany it, and how immensely difficult is the recovery of persons involved in it. They were brought up in the profession of the Christian religion—it may be in the very exact

and austere performance of religious duties. Their parents, their ancestors, were all most exemplary in the same way, and who, if not themselves, should have a claim to the Christian character? I shall not admonish my hearers that there is no such thing as prescription in Christianity for a man's personal interest in its privileges. Unhappily, the argument is very short, very plain, and brings us directly to the conclusion of the text.

We happen to have known some who had no other religion than an hereditary religion, and who were reported as religiously inclined, but whose course soon proved how untrue was this opinion respecting them. We have seen numbers of them gradually throwing off their religious inclinations, and becoming perfectly content with the reputation of *honest* men. This reputation, indeed, they keep up, and it is highly honorable in them to do so; but for any resemblance to our Lord Jesus Christ—for any evidence that they pay the least regard to his authority or his glory—for any that they ever think of him—you might as well, to use a comparison of the ancients, you might as well look for a knot in a bulrush. I speak of all those who have been religiously educated, and have turned their backs upon that holy name which they were early taught to fear. I bring into my re-

monstrance millions of facts, and what is infinitely more terrible, millions of immortal souls, that have sunk down to hell with all the benefit of a traditionary faith. If you will not hear me, hear them who have perished, and who can testify, by the most tremendous of all experience, that the religion of the father will not save the son; and that all in which they trusted was nothing more than the doings of the flesh, which never brought them out of the condemned world, nor ever enabled them to see the kingdom of God.

2. There are not a few among the men of more inquisitive minds, who hold the previous class of religionists in sufficient contempt. To inherit their faith as they would a tract of land or a bag of money; to be taught religion as they were taught their alphabet; or to join the cry and follow in the course of the multitude around them—appears to them ignoble and base, a sort of swindling for reputation upon the credit of more honest men. Christianity, they are told upon the highest of all authority, is a *reasonable service*, and they cannot conceive how any man, who consults his reasonable nature, can make an intelligent profession of a religion of which he has not examined the proofs; and he finds no difficulty in explaining the apostasy of those whom change of climate, of company, or the

habits of society, have introduced into a scene where their former principles and profession, if not disreputable, were at least of no advantage. For themselves they are satisfied upon mature examination, that revelation is true, and furnishes the only solid ground of present peace and future blessedness. Demonstration is always the same; conviction founded upon it never alters; and consequently, go where they will, they carry their religion with them. Christianity is never insulted, nor Christians put to the blush, by their infidelity.

We are not now to learn that belief arising from personal research and conviction, is in matters of reasoning of a much higher order than any persuasion induced by the authority or example of others. And as there is no necessity, so we have no inclination, to disparage the rational evidence for Christianity, and the conviction growing out of it. We maintain, on the contrary, that genuine conviction of revealed truth is the most rational thing imaginable; and that they who reject it, labor under disordered intellects. But it is still a most serious inquiry, whether the *merely* rational belief in the truth of the scriptures, such as has been described, has any connection with the salvation of the soul; or involves in the least degree the favor of God; or rises any higher than what our Lord calls the

flesh; i. e. whether it any more secures than can be attained by mere carnal reason, or is experienced by the *carnal mind, which is enmity against God.*

In his dispensations towards sinners, the Most High deals with them as with rational creatures, in whom their reason, though depraved, is not destroyed. He has therefore fortified his revelation by every sort of moral proof; so that his servants may always be *able to give a reason of the hope that is in them*; that every attack upon their faith and hope may be successfully repelled, and unbelievers left without excuse. But who does not see, that in order to accomplish its purpose, this must proceed upon principles common to the friends and the enemies of his Gospel; upon principles strictly within the reach of the unsanctified mind? Accordingly, a man by the use of his natural though corrupted reason, may easily arrive at the conclusion that the Bible is the word of God; nay, that every particular doctrine therein revealed, not excluding the very doctrines on which the salvation of the soul depends, are undeniably his word, and may be quite as sound in his speculative opinions as the believer who stands highest in the records of life. All this is nothing more than drawing fair conclusions from simple and well-established premises; and were this enough to constitute a

true Christian, the best logician would certainly be the soundest believer. But what is the fact? Are the most humble, tender, spiritual Christians to be found in the ranks of these men of reason? Does their religion ever stand in the way of those tempers and passions, which, the Scripture being judge, shut them out of the *kingdom of God*? Do we not see them to be as careless of their immortal souls, and of the things that accompany salvation, as if going to heaven were a matter of course? or let men live as they please, there were no possible risk of being refused an entrance? Do we not often see them reproaching, reviling, persecuting, those who do not choose to be cast at last among *the devil and his angels*, for the sake of company? Do they not deal as freely in that courtly vocabulary which finds no more respectful epithets for those who *give all diligence to make their calling and election sure*, than “enthusiasts,” “fanatics,” “priest-ridden,” “hypocrites,” as the veriest infidel in the land? Do they not all the while retain their *religion*, profess to be undoubted believers, and inveigh loudly against those spiritual ruffians who would snatch away from us our faith and hope? What shall we now say to these things, with the proofs of which the whole face of the community is overspread? Shall we say that these men are, in a scriptural sense,

Christians? that they have any mark about them of the *new creation*? that you could so much as suspect them to be *God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works*? The question is almost a libel upon human understanding, corrupted as it is? No, my friends, the utmost which this Christianity can pretend to, is a persuasion of the *fact* that the scripture is the word of God, and every one of its doctrines a part of his testimony. But between believing that they *are* his word, and believing *the testimony of God*, there is as wide a difference as between being in the kingdom of God and being out of it. Apostasy does not prevent clear perceptions of abstract truth. The wickedest man upon earth may have his head filled with right notions. Suppose ye that the devil doubts of the divine original of scripture, or that he is not well versed in their sense? It is his puny disciples *here*, who, swelled with the pride of their philosophical character, murder and man-
 e it in a way of which Satan himself would be ashamed. There is, therefore, nothing in all we have been considering, that may not be the fruit of depraved principle—nothing that at all requires a better or holier parentage. It may be, it often is, *born of the flesh*, and as worthless and unholy as the source from which it springs—it *is flesh*.

3. Some men's affections are much engaged in religious things—they undergo strong excitement, and these pass for evidence of a divine change.

In drawing this conclusion, has due allowance been made for the excitement of the preacher; for the energy, the pathos, the eloquence, of his manner? Have you not known some hearers of the word to be awed into seriousness, softened into tenderness, melted into tears? to experience these effects repeatedly, and yet manifest to the entire conviction of every observer, that they were only for the moment—a shower upon a rock; copious while the cloud poured, and instantly dried off. Has due allowance been made for the *occasion*, often of itself so touching as to subdue the feelings of the heart? for the time of life, or for the natural temperament, which, in minds of gentler mould, is extremely susceptible of soft impressions? for the power of sympathy, which the strongest nerve cannot always resist? and which bears down alike him who came to pray, and him who came to scoff? What multitudes of conversions, as they have been hastily called, has our day seen, which were to be referred to groanings, and screechings, and fallings, and faintings, and other extravagancies of a heated imagination, which have yet been extolled as the work of the Spirit of

God, and which have left behind them nothing but that animal lassitude which follows a fit of great excitement, or it may be something worse? To this general remark upon the effects of high-wrought feeling, ministers of the gospel ought to pay some attention. When God bestows a peculiar talent, he intends that it shall be employed, and the employment is generally obvious. The power of strong reasoning—of rousing the secure—of comforting the afflicted—of animating exhortation—of pathetic persuasion, he has distributed as it pleased him; to some after this manner, to another after that. Employ what he has given you for the glory of the Giver. Reason—rouse—comfort—exhort—persuade, as he hath enabled you; he will take care that his own gifts, properly used, shall do no harm. But never attempt, by unhallowed means, to stir up artificial emotions. Violent intonations, vehement utterances, furious gesticulations, irreverent boldness, you may put off for zeal, but you must not father your absurdities, nor its effects, upon the Spirit of God. Sooner or later he will bring you into disgrace, and show the spiritual children whom you think you have *begotten in the gospel*, to be indeed born *after your own image*. There is nothing in all this commotion of the affections, nor all the religion which is ascribed to it, that the *flesh* may not produce.

Bear in mind the parable of the stony-ground hearers, and the pungent lamentation over ancient failures. *O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee? O Judah, what shall I do unto thee? For your goodness is as the morning cloud; and as the early dew it goeth away.*

4. Among the professors of Christianity, are* some who lay a stress upon their *works* and their *zeal*.

It is quite an aphorism in religion, that *faith without works is dead, being alone*: and when the world is so full of lip-service, of Pharisees who *say and do not*, it is some relief to find any who *do as well as say*; and it seems harsh to question any thing in the shape of practical piety. We might however freely admit the amount of what is done, and yet tax the age, much as its liberality has been celebrated, with great niggardliness in promoting the kingdom of Jesus Christ. It is by the contributions of poor people, swelling the mass by their number, that those mighty operations which are now shaking the nations, have been chiefly commenced and carried on. To hear wealthy men, wearing the Christian name, pleading their inability to do what the twentieth part of their means, in the hands of those whose hearts lie in the right place, would do without difficulty, without complaint, without touching on a single earthly comfort, does

not give a very high idea of prevailing bounty ; and the complacency with which they talk of the wonderful occurrences of the day, looks very like a petition to the poor for a scrap of reputation. But passing this : allowing as much credit as is claimed on the score of alms and other good works ; are there no donations to pious and charitable purposes given but from a motive which the Searcher of hearts approves, and will reward ? This question, it is true, lies between the donor and his God. But to him, it is awfully serious. How much is done from mere constitutional generosity ? How much from the influence of example ? How much from the force of importunity ? How much from sectarian pride ? How much from sheer vanity ? all of which is set down to the credit of religion ; but not a farthing of which will be allowed as such in that day when the Son of man shall appear in his glory, to give to every one according to his works ! In this great inquiry, the *quantity* will be of no account ; the widow's mite will not outweigh the rich man's treasures, if the motive of both be alike reprehensible : and neither will be of any value, where evangelical charity was wanting. You *may give all your goods to feed the poor*, or to do the community any other service, yet without that heavenly grace, charity, you will be nothing. How many splendid monu-

ments are at this hour in existence of so false and delusive a liberality? It is very true, that few churches are now built, or hospitals founded, or colleges endowed, by the death-bed legacies of men, who seek to compensate in the last moment by such acts of equivocal piety, whole lives of iniquity and rapine, and to bribe the keeper of purgatory by the tender of gold which they cannot retain; but there are other, cheaper, more Christian-like forms of deception, where the light of truth has driven popery with her monks, penalties, pardons, and the whole rabble of her imposture from all respect in the public opinion.

We live at a time when the zeal for diffusing Bibles and for sending missionaries swallows up almost every other species of religious zeal, and when mere men of the world, judges, generals, politicians, are among the foremost in seconding and sometimes in leading the popular enthusiasm. It is good—it is glorious—it is the doing of the Lord. The silver is his—the gold is his—and he is pressing it into Messiah's service. But do none of those who are engaged in this holy work lay upon it an unscriptural stress? Is there not a righteousness fabricated from it of no firmer texture, nor valuable material, than the giving a Bible to a pauper or a dollar to an Indian mission? Do not many deceive their

souls with a notion, that to be a member of a Bible society is nearly if not quite equivalent to entering into the kingdom of God? And, though the idea is too gross to be formally avowed, is there not a fancy lurking about the heart, that a five-dollar bill is about enough to purchase the kingdom of heaven? If we should judge from the reluctance with which some men part with a little money for a purpose confessedly the most noble that is prosecuted upon earth, our conclusion would not be far from the fact. It will be well if individuals, who are trusting to such performances as these, do not at last meet with that fatal and final repulse: *I know you not; depart from me, ye workers of iniquity!* All such things can be explained without the supposition of a particle of preternatural grace. They may all at best proceed from the workings of a corrupted principle; they can be no better nor purer than their source, *for that which is born of the flesh is FLESH.*

This train of reflection might be carried out into a long detail; but I forbear, and call your attention to notice by what, in the

II. Place, a real work of the Spirit of God may be distinguished from every work of the flesh. *That which is born of the Spirit is spirit.*

1. Where the Spirit of God performs his gracious work, he introduces into the soul a *new*

principle altogether. This he has himself called a new man—a new creature—a being created anew in Christ Jesus. It is more than an improvement of our old faculties or affections. It partakes of the nature of its blessed Author. It is spirit—all spirit—nothing but spirit. It can receive no aliment from the flesh. It is supported by its immediate intercourse with the eternal Spirit. It brings into a fellowship, of which “flesh” has no manner of conception, with the living God. It is hidden—a sacred secret—hidden with the Lord Jesus Christ—with Christ in God—as perfectly impervious to the observation and inexplicable to the understanding of carnal men, as are the thoughts and affections of Christ himself. *The world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.* When you can find out Jesus Christ, you can find out a Christian, but not till then. He is utterly out of your world, the scene of your investigation. He is, as a Christian, where your researches never penetrated, and never can penetrate. I undertake not to explain his interior and spiritual life. I have no language that can describe him, nor have strangers to his peculiarities any ideas to comprehend him. But I bless the Lord my Savior, that when the simple proposition is announced, *that which is born of the Spirit is spirit*, there are some within these walls whose yearning hearts fly into his

meaning, and can attest the fact. They have just as good evidence of its existence as they have of their own—their *consciousness*. I cannot impart this evidence to the mind of another man; but to *me* it is paramount to all others.

The Spirit of God also witnesses with their spirits that they are the children of God; giving such perceptions and consciousness of the fact as set all disputation at defiance. These indeed are favored moments even to the most favored disciples. But there are other things, other consciousnesses, which, in the midst of general doubt, and under the blackness of temptations, show infallibly the operation of the Spirit of grace, a new life, a new principle, and order of living, for,

2. That which is born of the Spirit believes the testimony of God.

It was suggested above, that to believe that the Bible *is* the testimony of God, and to believe the testimony itself, makes all the difference of being in the kingdom of God and being out of it—all the difference between being real believers in Christ Jesus and believers in name only—between having the form of godliness and its power also. This is a peculiarity common to all that have been *born of the Spirit*. It is the *idiom* of their character, which the men of mere rational conviction can never learn. A

plain Christian believes every jot and tittle of divine revelation because God hath said it, and looks no farther for the ground of his faith. Arguments from miracles, from prophecy, and the whole stock of moral proofs, internal and external, have, properly speaking, nothing to do in forming his persuasion. He has higher, holier, more perfect ground, on which to build his faith, than the most conclusive reasoner the world ever saw is able to furnish. He *believes the witness of God* because it is HIS witness. He has got up to the fountain-head of truth—the most victorious evidence that can shed its light into the created mind. When he perceives the authority of the ever-blessed God in its glory and majesty no mathematician was ever half so sure of a demonstration in Euclid as he is of the truth of that portion of the word of grace thus divinely attested. This explains at once why Christians, though without any learning—though extremely limited in their capacities of attaining it—are yet so firm in their faith, and are not to be circumvented by those who *speak lies in hypocrisy*, nor by the *craftiness of those who lie in wait to deceive*. They may catch in their toils, as we see every day, the witty, the wise, the disputer, the reasoner, of this world, but they lay not their sacrilegious hands upon God's elect. He has given them by the regenerating Spirit an

understanding to know him that is TRUTH, and has made them so one with him *as to be in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ*. This Jesus Christ is the true God, therefore he is the eternal life. Nor is there any power in hell or out of it to move them from that ground. Seest thou that man? He walks by faith, not by sight. He is one of those guileless souls, who cannot *argue* for Christ, but he can *burn* for him; and while the flames are consuming his body, can commit it to the Lord Jesus, with infinite confidence of its being raised up in glory to an incorruptible inheritance. How came he by his faith? Does it rest upon your reasoning, or any thing of the sort? Upon *your* reasoning?—a poor, feeble, blundering creature like himself! Why he would not burn one of his fingers for a string of your syllogisms long enough to belt the earth; and a rare fool would he be if he should. Other influence has been at work. The *Spirit of faith* has touched his heart. He has revealed Christ Jesus in him the hope of glory, and made his *faith to be the evidence of things not seen, the substance of things hoped for*. Through this *faith the elders obtained a good report*, and the same faith must possess, and fill, and rule, in every bosom that entertains a scriptural expectation of *seeing God*.

3. That which is born of the Spirit cherishes the highest esteem of our Lord Jesus Christ. *He shall glorify me*, said the Saviour, *for he shall take of mine and shall show it unto you.*

There are people, with great professions of religion, that take much pains to hinder the world from thinking too highly of Jesus Christ. They even try to degrade him below his own angels; and if that were not enough, can feed their vanity by a comparison between him and themselves, in which they have quite the advantage. A ringleader in one of these sects did not scruple thus to qualify his commendation, that "Jesus Christ was a very good man, but no philosopher." He claimed to be a philosopher himself, and who then was the more important personage, in his eyes, is manifest enough. (Such blasphemy, which treats our Lord Jesus Christ with less respect than does the devil himself, never came from the Holy Spirit, nor fouled the mouths of any who were born of him.) The scriptures, on the contrary, magnify him with every form of elevated and high-wrought expression. There he has a name which is above every name. He is seated at the right hand of God. He sends forth the angels to do his will, and glorious as they are, they are commanded to worship him even when he was an incarnate babe. He sits arbiter of the fate

of men and devils. The great empire of the grave is under his control. The generations of the dead come forth at his bidding, and not one of them shall escape his righteous doom. In short, every name proper to the true God; every term by which the attributes of Deity can be expressed; the whole stock of human language is exhausted to heap up epithets of glory upon Jesus Christ. There are things with which the soul of a believer is in perfect accord. They delight him, even to rapture. Nothing good and glorious is too good and glorious for his gracious Redeemer. Has he loved *me* and given *himself* for *me*? Do I owe my place among the ransomed of the Lord to his unmerited, unutterable grace? Come, fellow-citizens of the saints, ye household of salvation, strike all your harps at once! Come, ye holy ones on earth, and ye holy ones in heaven, tune up your sweetest anthems! Lift up your grateful hands, and crown him Lord of all! Thus a *Christian* feels towards his Redeemer. It is that which is born of the Spirit, breathing the air and enjoying the elasticity of the spiritual world.

4. That which is born of the Spirit makes incessant use of the Spiritual Saviour.

He has said, *without me ye can do nothing*; and so a Christian finds it. His attachment to his Redeemer, is not to make a parade on a gala

day, and have done with it; it is necessary for his habitual walk. The blood of Christ, which has washed away his sins—the merits of Christ, from which he gets his title to eternal life, must every hour exert their virtue upon his soul. He cannot go to the throne of grace without the blood of sacrifice, and the interceding priest—can perform none of his duties, endure none of his trials, face none of his foes, but in the strength of his heavenly leader—*but through Christ strengthening him he can do all things.* This man is a Christian, born of the Spirit; all his characteristics are spiritual, and with him *Christ is all and in all.*

Now, friends and brethren, who and what are ye? To whom do you belong, and whither are ye going? Search and look: for upon the decision of these questions hangs your eternity; and you may be just upon the brink. Do not deceive yourselves. A Christian is not of earthly materials or manufacture. Flesh and blood, with all its powers, attainments, and persuasions, can do nothing for you. The Spirit of God must do the work; he must open your eyes, must renew your hearts, must lead you to Jesus, must do everything; for if you are his, you are *his workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before prepared that ye should walk in them.* But if any man have not the

Spirit of Christ, he is none of his ; and whatever may be his security, his hope, or his presumption, will be disowned in that day, when one word of approbation will be worth more than a thousand worlds.

TRUE HONOR.

SERMON VI.

TRUE HONOR.

JOHN V. 44.

How can ye believe, which receive honor one of another, and seek not the honor that cometh from God only?

NEXT to a being perfectly holy, there is nothing so indefatigable as a mind given to wickedness. Let the life of Jesus Christ supply the proof. From the beginning to the end of his public course, he encountered the contradiction of sinners; walked among their snares; and sustained, in every shape, ceaseless conflict with their hatred and hostility. That they were invariably foiled, exposed, disgraced, did not in the least deter them

from repeating the same hopeless experiment. In fact, having all shared in their turns the same fate, the ignominy of their defeat was too much divided to be a reproach. The Pharisee could not point at the Sadducees, nor these at the Herodians, because the finger of scorn could be pointed back again. There was no public opinion which they regarded, to frown them into decency. It came to be a practical maxim with them, that to be defeated and silenced by Jesus Christ, was no disgrace; and they were too closely united in the brotherhood of guilt to suffer any abatement of their rancor. (The professing world affords, so far as I know, but one parallel of their malevolence and persecution; and that is to be found among the self-styled rational and philosophical Christians.) They seized the occasion of his curing the impotent man on the Sabbath-day, to accuse him as a breaker of God's laws; and when he vindicated himself on this principle, *My Father worketh hitherto and I work*, they heightened their accusation into a charge of blasphemy, and *sought the more to kill him, because he had not only broken the Sabbath, but said that God was his father, making himself equal with God*. What wrongs and insults did the Lord Jesus endure at the hands of these ancient Unitarians! (Wrongs and insults to be surpassed only by those from the heirs of their unbelief, the modern Unitarians.) Their im-

putation of blasphemy he repels, by claiming such prerogatives, powers, and honors, as are proper to God only ; and winds up his defence, by giving these hypocrites a sensible proof that he was all what they deemed it blasphemy in him to pretend to be ; gave them this sensible proof by breaking open the recesses of their hearts, bringing into light their secret principles of action, and proving to their faces the base and abominable motives of their conduct. The applause of men lay at the bottom of their zeal for God, and effectually excluded all love for him, and all faith in his testimony. *How can ye believe who receive honor one of another, and seek not the honor which cometh from God only.*

This rebuke to pharisaical pride, and explanation of pharasaical unbelief, contains a principle of universal application : the *inconsistency of receiving honor from men, with the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ*. They are such eternal opposites, that they cannot live in the same heart. Whoever cleaves to the one must let the other go. We cannot, indeed, determine the existence in this matter of a corrupt propensity with the precision of our Lord Jesus Christ, nor could any of his apostles ; because we have not, nor had they, like him, the faculty of searching the heart. But availing ourselves of his declarations, and pursuing the path which his spirit has marked out for us in

the word, we shall, by his grace, be enabled to assist others in the important and difficult work of searching their own hearts. Let us therefore, try to fix by this rule, the reigning principles of men *who receive honor one of another*; and why they produce an *impediment, amounting to an absolute impossibility, of believing on our Lord Jesus Christ?*

I. What are the reigning principles of men who receive honor one of another?

A good name, saith the scripture, is rather to be chosen than great riches. He who has once discarded it from the number of his inestimable things—who is at no pains to keep it up—who would as soon commit an act from which his character is sure to lose as one from which it is as sure to gain, has found his place among the off-scourings of human nature, and is one of the most dangerous enemies to human peace. It is a false indulgence, a pernicious liberty, which permits a man to go at large who has forgotten to blush. We should sadly mistake the Redeemer's meaning, if we supposed that he intends to untie the bands of civil society, or those ruffian hands which would gladly engage in the detestable work. His own people guard their characters with the utmost vigilance, and are the foremost to cultivate *whatsoever things are of good report.* To have therefore a good name—to be well reported of for good

works—to enjoy the praises of other men, for upright principles and worthy deeds, is no obstacle to our faith; it is its natural consequence.

But the scriptures, while they set its just value upon a fair fame in the eyes of men, never propose it as the end, or as the recompense of actions substantially correct. They refer every thing to the authority of God as its reason, and to its approbation as its reward. Their design throughout is to bring us back to the God from whom we have deeply revolted; to break the power of all meaner influences and motives; to elevate our views to him, the only source of duty, honor, and happiness; making him the centre of all our affections, as he is of all holy intelligences; and turning all our thoughts to *him first, him midst, him last, him without end.*

The character of the Pharisees was precisely the reverse of this: and so is the character of all who, like them, *receive honor one of another.* Good things they did, many of them—good things for number and kind, which far outstrip the deeds of some who think that they sufficiently prove their faith by their works. The Pharisee, who thanked God that he *was not like other men, extortioners, adulterers, unjust, nor even like the poor sinner of a publican that stood beside him, who fasted twice in the week, who gave tithes of all that he possessed,* leaves far behind him in the race both of negative

and positive virtues, many a gallant and many a grave professor of Christianity. O could we bring them to but the half of the Pharisee's liberality, there should never be any lack of means for religious purposes. Yet he who *knew what was in man*, has planted his anathema upon the Pharisee's glory, and has told us most explicitly, that *except our righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, we shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven*. Why, what was it that spoiled so fair a show? What made so rich a stockholder a bankrupt in the wealth of the skies, and exhibited him to the eyes of holy angels and men, a more wretched pauper than the beggar whose rags were his wardrobe, and his seat a dunghill? This: he *loved the praise of men more than the praise of God*. All his devotions were performed, all his virtues displayed, all his distinctions sought, for the ostentation of human notice, and the breath of human applause. *God was not in all his thoughts*—that which he coveted, he obtained—he got *his reward*, and *lost his soul*. *So shall my heavenly Father do also unto you*, if your inward parts, like his, are found to be *very rottenness*. Let us take this dreadful character, enlightened as it is with the curse of God, and carry it round among the religious community, to see if it warns none to fear an equally terrible fate.

Let us see whether its brand of reprobation is not upon many a profession which cries "Lord, Lord," with the air of a disciple, and confidently calculates upon a triumphant issue.

A marked revolution has taken place within a few years in the public sentiment. Most of us can remember when scepticism, like an overflowing stream, rushed through our land. It penetrated alike into the cabinet, the office, the shop, the employments of agriculture; the circulation of the Bible was stopped; the bench, the bar, the schools of medicine and of merchandise, the mechanic and the farmer, were infected with the mania. Our boys must set up for free-thinking before they were capable of thinking at all. To laugh at the scriptures was quite as necessary for a fine gentleman as to defraud his humble creditors by petty acts of dishonesty. A scrap of Paine's stolen ribaldry was a sufficient answer to the Christian bigot. In short, a vast multitude of people in these United States agreed in crying down the Bible, and crying up the philosopher of infidelity.

The transition was too violent. The shock to national habit and the national conscience altogether insupportable. People, awakened from their dream, discovered that when they threw away the Bible they were *without God*, and that without God they were *without hope in the world*.

A revulsion, forcible in proportion to the extreme

into which they had been driven, was the natural result; and the tide of opinion set in strongly in a contrary, i. e. in a Christian direction—a direction in which it continues to run at this day, and so may it continue to run till that day when our Lord Jesus Christ *shall take to him his great power and reign.*

To the current of public opinion, returning into its wonted channels there was another cause, which powerfully co-operated in aiding the same general effect.

In some parts of the country infidelity was found to be intimately associated with odious politics and straightway those very men who, if left to themselves, had been thorough infidels, became vigorous Christians, that they might be removed as far as possible from every point of communion with *Jacobins*; insomuch that in a great town, among the descendants of the pilgrims, whose public worship had fallen into disrepute, and was much neglected among the higher orders, it became a fashion to go to *church*, which fashion has continued: though whether the ministrations which they support have anything in common with the faith of their fathers or with the word of God, or can in any manner assist a sinner who desires to know what he shall do to be saved, is a question on which none but the most melancholy negatives can be given. Besides, in many sec-

tions of the land, there have been manifest effusions of the Holy Spirit of God. He has been as the rain, and he has been as the dew—sometimes more powerfully and sometimes more gently influencing the hearts of men. Many, we have reason to hope, were brought safely under the bond of God's covenant; and many, we have reason to fear, have turned like the *dog to his vomit, and like the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.*

These things concurred in giving to the public feeling an irresistible impulse. With all the secret enmity which prevails against true religion, as implacable and bitter as ever, there is great external respect shown to the forms and professions of Christianity. *Infidel* is now a term of reproach. Such being the state of society, can we imagine that all who name the name of Christ do it in simplicity and truth? from the constraining power of his *love*? Among the ten thousand hail masters which fill our ears are there no Iscariot voices? No lips which convert the token of tender affection into the medium of treason? No hearts which are apparently with the disciples and in reality with the adversary? No hand which meets the hand of Jesus in the dish, and is prepared to make merchandise of his blood? Should a *mighty wind* from heaven *shake our fig-tree*, would not the round be strewed *with her untimely figs*?

To speak plainly, are there not multitudes among professed Christians, whose sole or chief motive is the reputation which they enjoy? Who are held to their allegiance purely by the tie of popularity? There is some credit attached to the Christian name; and while that credit lasts, none are more strenuous Christians. But should the times change—should God in his providence permit the enemy again to come in like a flood—should Christianity be accounted infamous, or be subjected to heavy worldly sacrifices or personal perils—alas! alas! for the visible church! How would her ranks be thinned by desertion! and the Captain of salvation be left with those few followers to whom he has *given the white stone and the new name!* (Those synagogues, indeed, nicknamed rational churches, would lose nothing. Times of apostasy are always propitious to the recruiting service of Satan, and apostates the first to grasp at his bounty-money, and to cry, *Who is like unto the beast? Who is able to make war with him?* But) How many of whom we had reason to *hope for things that accompany salvation would draw back unto perdition?* Examine quickly, while the hour of forbearance is not yet exhausted, ye who are allured by the respectability of religion into a profession of the faith. You who are at best receiving honor one of another, and your

name at present must be erased from the *album*, the list of those who believe on the Son of God.

In the next place, our Lord Jesus Christ, when *he ascended up on high, received gifts for men*, which he distributes in his sovereignty as it hath pleased him. Among these corruption finds much fuel for unhallowed profession. To particularize:

1. The ministry of the word.

By the very nature of the case, as well as by the institution of the Redeemer, this office exercises a powerful influence upon the church and on society, and has a proportional degree of honor connected with it. True, where it is stripped of the support of a civil establishment, it can seldom boast any *golden* charms. A man may often shave more gold out of a block of timber than he can from his services in the ministry; but there are men not a few, whose ambition lies in another direction, and who regard as dross all money beyond the supply of their immediate necessities. Now, to such men of a literary turn and of decent moral habits, the pulpit presents what would be called a fair object of secular ambition. To appear once or twice a week in a marked distinction—to enjoy prerogatives which custom at least has rendered inviolable (the effectual and the only safeguard of many a preacher)—to exhibit the resources of intellect with the attractions of taste and the coruscations of genius—to enforce valuable moral truth by elo-

quence, which shall be followed in the public assembly by silent admiration, and out of it by applause and celebrity—and a respect and influence unattainable in ordinary stations—what carnal heart is proof against these temptations? It is woful to consider that the devil has, through these means, succeeded in planting his servants down in stations which were intended for Zion's watchmen. Love to the souls of men and to the Saviour of their souls—a sense of their dire responsibility for the blood of men, and an honest desire to be faithful, never entered the minds of some who have yet rushed fearlessly into the ministry. The calling is reputable; they wish to sustain its repute in the eyes of the world; they receive honor from men; it is the aliment of their hope, and the object of their anxiety. Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ they have none. Not a thievish publican nor a strolling harlot who are not nearer the kingdom of God than they, and their ultimate reckoning will be dreadful beyond description.

Besides the pulpit, there are other talents of which our Lord shall exact an account. It is distressing to think that for the most part he will exact it of those who never fairly brought them into exercise; and on the other hand, that many whom he never employed have industriously run into forbidden paths. I know not a more unchristian doctrine, nor one more pregnant with prac-

tical mischiefs, than the doctrine which takes the part of the *gifted brethren*. These brethren, if they invade not your pulpits, which, thanks to the good order established in some churches, they cannot do, nevertheless lay hold of the public praying societies. On all occasions they are ready—on all occasions foremost. They are compared with the ministry, and sometimes not to the advantage of the latter. In process of time they begin to try their hand at exhortation—next at preaching—and where, do they say, is the mighty difference? And thus with self-complacency do they edge onwards, until the ministry is surprised by the intrusion and pollution of those whom God never gave talent, nor man cultivation. Mistake me not. I am no enemy to prayer nor to praying societies. But I am an enemy to that withdrawing of men out of their proper place. I am an enemy to whatever would fill them with an improper conceit of themselves. I am an enemy to this giving undue honor to those to whom it is not due, and to converting the worship of God into a vehicle for the vanity of man, and of the smallest of men. There is much ground to fear that many a man's condemnation will be found on his distinction at a praying society. He wished to be noticed—he *was* noticed. To be talked of—he *was* talked of. To be praised—he *was* praised. He sought honor of men—he got it, and it is all he is likely to get.

He *sought not the honor that cometh from God only*, and will be found at last to have not been even a believer in Jesus Christ.

I have not time to trace the different forms in which, under religious pretences, *men receive honor one of another*, to the detriment of all sound principle and the destruction of their own souls. It remains to show

II. Why the prevalence of such a temper is inconsistent with the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ.

1. It involves a principle essentially sinful.

God alone is the universal monarch, the single fountain of true honor, throughout the universe. When we seek our honor in any other quarter, to the neglect of that which cometh from him alone, we enter into a conspiracy against his throne. We exalt into his place, and give the glory due to his name, to creatures, to men, and often to bad men. We love, we pursue, we worship, a phantom. We set up the stumbling block of our iniquity in our hearts—commit that high rebellion which he has visited from age to age, and now visits, and will continue to visit till the consummation of all things, with his sharpest rebukes, his heaviest curses. To *receive honor from one another, while we seek not the honor that cometh from God only*, is to cherish in our hearts the very core of corruption, to identify ourselves in our characters

and interests with the fallen spirits, and to expose ourselves infallibly to their fate. What can be conceived more horrible, more utterly at variance with the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, more deserving of eternal damnation, than to declare practically that we have found a more bountiful benefactor—a nobler object of our praise—a more sufficient portion for our hearts—a richer source of good—than the living God. And what do they do less, who seek their *honor one of another*, in preference to that *which cometh from God only*?

2. Receiving honor from men necessarily implies criminal conformity to the world of sinners.

That which we most respect, admire, and love, we are prone to imitate. It is a law of our being; and has its place, and exerts its force, in the formation of spiritual as well as other character. If you receive honor from the world, as contradistinguished from the honor which cometh from God only, you must of necessity be like the world; i. e. be most unlike God, who calls *his people into the fellowship of his son Jesus Christ*. The world also exercises a stern, despotic power over its votaries. You must obey its maxims; you must adopt its modes; you must speak its language; you must cultivate its temper; you must be the friend of its friends, and the enemy of its enemies; or its honor will be denied to you, and you will be excommunicated from within its pale. The world will not

throw away its honors upon those who undervalue them: and why should it? I do not mean that you must abjure a religious profession: profess what you please, but go no farther, or not so far as to war with its doctrines, and renounce its practises. You may have as much of a religious air, and be as devout in your religious observances as you think proper, and lose none of your honor from men. The world knows that you may have all these, often more of their appearances, than many whom it cannot endure; and be sound in its interests all the while. Keep it company, and wear its image, and it will never quarrel with you for walking in the *broad way*, with a Christian mark. But the moment you open your heart to one particle of the love of God, or faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, you are ruined, you are hated, despised, proscribed. Now, how can this friendly correspondence with the world, without which it is vain to look for its honors, consist with the condition and character of a true believer? How can it admit that gracious singularity which is mocked on earth, but displays unutterable glories before the angels of God? How does it accord with being *pilgrims and strangers who seek a better country, that is, an heavenly*? How with that state of separation which their God hath commanded: *Come ye out from among them, and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive*

you, and be a father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and my daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. Brethren, the thing is impossible. And so it is decided, *if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.* As receiving honor one from another, is by the terms of the text, in opposition to *seeking that honor that cometh from God only*, and as it implies a participation of all those tempers and feelings which are exactly the reverse of all the teachings and influence of the Spirit of God, it follows, that so long as a man continues thus to receive honor, so long as he lays such a stress upon human approbation, it is simply and forever impossible that he should be a believer in Jesus Christ, or have the smallest share in his salvation, or one single hope towards God, which will not perish as infallibly as the leaf fades and falls in autumn.

This receiving honor one of another, deceives men by its specious form.

The love of honor, is a principle of our nature as it came from the hands of its Divine Maker. He framed us for glory, honor, and immortality. But its beauties are all laid waste, and its direction wholly perverted, by that universal destroyer, Sin. Yet the principle, though depraved, remains, is found to operate most strongly in the most ingenuous spirits, and has actually gone so far as avowedly to dispute the empire with the law of God.

We hear it confidently stated, as if it were a moral axiom, that there are two laws for society, religion, and the law of honor; and that when a man disregards the sanctions of one, he is amenable to the other. A notable expedient for a sinful worm, to improve the moral government of God his maker! Besides, we are bound, even by the law of God, to render *honor where honor is due*. Great private worth, and public services command and should command, our most respectful homage. But the misery is, that this homage, and this love of honor, twine round about the soul, and terminate without looking farther. It makes the man forget his immortal destiny—forget the crown of righteousness—forget the righteous Judge, and cleave to earth, and the voice of earthly praise, as to the perfection of his bliss. This principle is most observable in political and military men. I shudder when I think the applauses of our country are avowedly the motives and the reward of our most distinguished men; and when I see the public press commending the greatness and magnanimity of the sentiment, and diffusing the moral pestilence through a thousand streams into the very heart of the community—and that too, in many instances, under the control of men called Christians—but who seem to forget on these occasions, that God, or his glory, has any claim on their presses. O happy for them, if God too were to

forget all the indignities which they have put upon his name. I have assigned a reason which makes it very hard for Christianity to thrive in a camp, or in a cabinet: and it is quite a rarity, an eighth wonder of the world, to find a godly soldier or statesman. How melancholy the reflection, that from the field of honor, in the very centre of their glories, our bravest men are often summoned in an instant to their eternal reckoning, without having perhaps, had in their lives one serious thought of the God with whom they have to do! Alas! what will the honor derived from men avail them at his bar! My heart sickens at the thought; and finds no relief but from the assurance that they are in the hands of one who will do them no injustice.

4. Finally, the sin of which I speak, making the honor that cometh from men, to compensate and supersede that which cometh from God only, cannot be excused as a sin of infirmity. The strength of physical passions, the suddenness and violence of temptation, have here no place. It is a sin of *calculation*. The whole soul enters into it; habits are formed by it; and habits do not spring up like mushrooms, they grow by slow degrees. The last, though at all times a feeble apology for crime, surprises, the being taken unawares, is swept away. It is a deliberate, systematic rebellion against God. It is the indulgence of wilful transgression, which is utterly inconsistent with every gracious princi-

ple, and where it reigns, marks. without a peradventure, an unbeliever in the Lord Jesus Christ.

And now, my friends, if these things are true, and that they are is just as certain as that God hath spoken to us, how wide a scope and how terrible a necessity do they create for the examination of our own hearts! Who does not, in some shape or other, fall under the accusation of the text? Be persuaded to make diligent search; for while it stands against a single individual, it infallibly shuts him out of the kingdom of God. Should an angel be commissioned by revelation to go among the hearers of the gospel—the professors of the religion of Jesus Christ—and put his mark upon the forehead of all who are under the ban of the text, whose forehead would be without a stigma? Would it be thine? Why, then, does thy bosom heave and thy heart palpitate? Why wilt thou not learn betimes to seek the honor that cometh from God only? How long shall the opinion of men usurp its place? How long will ye seek in political or fashionable life that applause which the Lord abhors, and may, and without his great prevention will, draw after it your eternal destruction? Where is the man who has made even honorable politics his pursuit whose religious sensibilities were not blunted, and his conscience of rectitude warped? Who has carried into the vortex of the political whirlpool a mind uncontaminated with

the corruption that is in the world, and brought it out again equally pure ?

Among all the votaries of fashion in whom the religious sense is not wholly obliterated, who has attempted to conciliate the service of God with the honor that cometh one from another and succeeded ? Whose garments have not smelt, whose visages have not been blackened, by the infernal fire which they have been compelled to approach ? Who has not learned some maxims, or indulged some practice, which has put a wider separation between God and them, and prepared them for a deeper plunge into transgression when the next opportunity should offer ? Shall I propose the question ? Are there any whose lips have received the hallowed symbols of the body and blood of Jesus the Saviour, and whose feet, ere the taste of that holy pledge had died away, have gone greedily into the same excess of riot with those who walk in the vanity of their minds ? In a word, are there none whose consciences whisper to them that the inspiring motive to all their religious appearance and profession has been the applauses of their fellow-men ? What shall I say to them all ? Awake ! arise ! flee ! flee for your lives from this treacherous ground that stretches over the edge of the bottomless pit ! Soon may the voice of that thunder be heard which shall shake it into fragments beneath your feet, and you are irrevocably

ingulfed. Even now the cry of despair from some who were gay and careless as any of you can be, rings in my ear. They were taken unprepared and hurried away with all their reasonings, their decencies, their mistaken religion, and have found their error when the hope of redemption was past! See that this be not your case. See to it soon; see to it immediately. To-day is the accepted time; to-day is the day of salvation. Be not deceived. Yet a little while, and *the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven in flaming fire, taking vengeance of those who know not God and obey not the gospel.* The Lord grant that you may be able to stand before him in that final and fiery visitation!

APOSTOLIC COMMISSION.

S E R M O N V I I .

APOSTOLIC COMMISSION.

LUKE XXIV. 47.

And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

THE work which the Father had given the Lord Jesus to do was now finished. He had gone through the several stages of his humiliation, and had ceased to be the *man of sorrows and acquainted with grief*. He had magnified the law and made it honorable, and brought in everlasting righteousness, even the righteousness of God, for the justification of men. He had put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, pouring out the blood of his

cross as a ransom for their souls. He had passed through the gates of death; had remained in his territories long enough to prove the fact of his having died, and to work the overthrow of his kingdom; had risen in his majesty, and repassed as a conqueror those barriers through which he was led as a prisoner; had frustrated, defeated, and made an open show of the hosts of hell, and was just about ascending in the glory of the Captain of salvation up to his native heavens, there to appear in the presence of God for us! How awful the pause! how tender yet terrifying the crisis! Methinks the cry is heard to the farthest verge of Creation, *Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ.* The partition-wall is tottering to its base, and presently will be heard the crash of its fall. The gates of heavenly light are to be unbarred to the world, and floods of living water from the rock of Zion, are to cool and refresh and invigorate the nations. The tabernacle of God is to dwell with men; they are to become his people; he is to be their God; he is to dwell among them, to walk in the midst of them, to cast out the prince of this world, and to bring back the days of primeval glory and blessedness. What! is all this to be effected in our world? Yes! in *our* world! Why, it is full of crimes and curses; it is overrun with the enemies of God. Devils

and devilish men have the rule here. The soil is yet reeking with the blood of the Prince of life. Not a bosom heaves nor a tear starts under the guilt of this "deep damnation." How then shall this marvelous revolution be accomplished? Gather together the wise men, the philosophers; ask them whether the scheme is practicable, whether these fairy visions can be realized. The wise men! the philosophers! They are deep in the great apostasy; they are themselves ringleaders in treason, leaders of the bands of rebels: they are as ignorant as they are criminal. Away with their fooleries! Let me hear the Son of God breathe this portentous silence, *Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord.* He who controls the spirits of all flesh issues forth the command in its simple majesty, that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. Observe, my Christian friends, the grandeur of this commission. The Lord Jesus speaks like one who had the "spirits of all flesh" under his control. The magnitude of the object, the difficulty of the enterprise, the feebleness of the means, are not so much as mentioned. *Let there be light*, was not uttered with more decision at the first creation, than is this charge to his apostles at the second. The speaker and the energy were the same. It was all worthy of God manifest in the flesh, and so

surely as his lips have pronounced the words the effect must follow. The disciples felt their power. Eleven men, without arms or armies, influence, connections, wealth, or literature, are sent to subdue the nations. Not a remonstrance, a scruple or a doubt, is heard from their lips. *I am with you always, I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay or resist*, hushed every fear, resolved every difficulty, filled them with courage, crowned them with success.

The text embraces three topics of most interesting inquiry; the extent of the apostolic commission, the substance of their message, and a singular circumstance connected with the commencement of their labors. They were charged with an embassy to *all nations*. They were to *preach repentance and remission of sins in the name of Jesus*, and they were to *begin at Jerusalem*.*

I. The substance of their commission: "To preach repentance and remission of sins in the name of Jesus."

Repentance is a term of great latitude. It primarily signifies, *a change of mind*: and this general idea adheres to every form of its application. When the Jew was commanded to *repent*, his whole notions concerning the person and salvation

* The third topic was reserved for a second sermon, which was never written.—ED.

of the Messiah were to undergo a revolution, *Repent ye, for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand.* All his preconceived opinions of the Christ as a temporal deliverer, a magnificent conqueror, by whom his nation was to be rescued from the domination of the Romans, and placed at the head of the whole earth, were to be abandoned.

When the Gentile was commanded to repent, all his ideas concerning the religion of his country, of his ancestors, were to be inverted: *Surely our fathers have inherited lies, vanities, and things wherein there is no profit.* Both Jew and Gentile were enjoined to alter entirely the nature of their conceptions of truth and happiness.

What sort of an enterprise was this? Judge ye who know how difficult it is to root out an ancient prejudice from the mind of man. Who can estimate the sacrifice which it costs his *vanity*? how little, how feeble, how paltry the success of similar attempts, upon *any thing* consecrated by established modes of thinking and feeling. Particularly, how hopeless must the experiment be, when it is directed against men's ideas of national superiority. Their climate and their country the finest in the world! their persons the handsomest, the bravest, the most skilful! their religion the best, the most divine! all their institutions of the highest order! For example: we are accustomed to applaud ourselves as "the most enlightened people in

the universe ;” and our institutions, both civil and political, as excelling all others ; as perfect, although we are every now and then in the habit of mending, or trying to mend them. Should any one now attempt to reason us out of our prepossessions, to persuade us that the objects of our admiration are in reality detestable, and that we never shall know what decency, and dignity, and pre-eminence mean, until we throw them all away, trample them under foot, and open our ears to a new set of instructions, and our hearts to a new set of perceptions altogether. What reception, suppose ye, would this apostle of revolution meet ? How many would he persuade ? What other effect could he hope to produce, than to arm the community against him, as an insane man ?

Now, then, judge from your own sensations what the ambassador of the cross had to hope, when attacking opinions and prejudices infinitely stronger than those of civil policy, or political predilections, he preached to men the necessity of changing, radically, their whole convictions of truth and happiness ?

Nor is the necessity for such a change less at this moment, nor will it be less while the world endures, than it was at the first promulgation of the gospel. Be not startled at this assertion ! Say not, “ The Jews had misunderstood and perverted the scriptures of their own prophets ; they

were dreaming about a Messiah, such as their vain imaginations had formed him; and to reap any benefit from him, they must be recalled to a sound mind." The Gentiles, again, had lost altogether the knowledge of the true God. They had run into all excess of riot in their madness upon their idols, and must be reclaimed from these vanities to the living and true God. To both Jew and Gentile, therefore, the doctrine and the duty of repentance was strictly applicable; and so it is to these unhappy men, who in the darkness of paganism, are without God. But to us, to Christians, who have imbibed from our infancy those important truths which were new both to Jews and Gentiles, the doctrine of this *repentance* is superfluous. Stay a little, and consider. The effect of Jewish carnality, and pagan idolatry, was to separate between them and their God; to make them forget the end of their being; to drench them in sense; to chain them to this world; and, finally, to *drown them in destruction and perdition*. Are we, with all our superior light, with all our commiseration for Jewish blindness and heathen degradation, in no danger of the same sin, and of the same ruin? Are none of our affections estranged from God, the sovereign good, and set on lying vanities which cannot profit? Are not the minds of many called Christians, as far from just ideas concerning the spiritual character and work of our Lord Jesus

Christ, as the grossest and most obstinate Jews? and their hearts as full of *abominable idolatries*, as the most debased and polluted pagan? Deceive not your own selves. The Most High, regards not the form, where he sees the substance of idolatry. You may look with contempt and abhorrence upon a wooden or golden god in the shape of a man, or a *four-footed beast, or a creeping thing*. Is it any thing better, suppose ye, when it has the devotion of all your faculties, the ardor of your whole hearts, your undivided love and worship, in the shape of a dollar, or a guinea, or a bank note? When the all-seeing glance of God, your Maker, strikes through the bosoms of this assembly, does he perceive there no perverted principles, no unhallowed emotion, no lust of the flesh, nor lust of the eye, nor pride of life? Cannot he single out any who place their happiness in these things as if they were the chief good? Stand forth, ye idolaters, ye evangelized, and therefore most criminal idolaters, and hear his voice, fresh from the heavens, to you, *Repent*, or perish. Change all your principles and judgments, or not a man of you shall see the kingdom of God. You may stand high in the respect of the world, but know ye not that the friendship of this world is enmity with God. If any man, therefore, will be the friend of the world, he must be the enemy of God. And what will ye do,

when he shall meet you as a bear robbed of her whelps?

But the repentance which my text enjoins, and the apostles preach, is not merely such an alteration in men's views as amounts to a rational and speculative conviction of truth, of duty, and of happiness. Without this they shall in vain hope to enter the kingdom of God. But this alone will not insure their admittance. You may be, in these matters, as orthodox as the devil, and as far from heaven.

The repentance which is expected from us goes much deeper, and makes more thorough work. It teaches us to view our errors, not merely as *mistakes*, but as *sin*; as having led us just as far towards ruin as we wandered from God. It sinks into the heart, turns it inside out, shows the evils which lurk there, reaches the very source of all our iniquities, the corruption of our nature; makes us sensible that we are unlike the holy God, unmeet for his fellowship, at enmity with him, exposed to the perdition of his frown. If left to its own operation it would be the sorrow of the world, which works melancholy, despair, death. But it is directed by a kindlier and holier influence. It creates,

1. Godly sorrow for sin: as against all that is good, and pure, and kind, in the Infinite One; against all his authority, all his patience, all his

grace. That our hearts should be a fountain, and our lives a channel, of such floods of ingratitude, filth, rebellion, fill us with dismay, and the most unfeigned compunction.

2. It fills with hatred of our sins. Hatred, as those things which have dishonored the majesty in the heavens, and have rendered us accomplices in treason, with the spirits of the pit—hatred as at those things which have abused the divine mercies, despised the divine judgments, caused our Lord Jesus Christ to shed his most precious blood—hatred, as being emphatically the destroyers of soul, of body, of hope: which made the devil, which kindled hell, and will consign to its untold wo all over whom they reign.

3. This repentance leads to a *confession* of sin; deep, humble, unaffected. No apologies, no extenuations. *Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee; if thou Lord should mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand—God be merciful to me a sinner*, is the language of a broken, a contrite, a repenting heart.

4. This repentance involves a forsaking of sin and return to God. It is he who forsakes, not who conceals his sin, that shall find mercy. The true penitent forsakes his sin wholly and universally. He makes no reserve for a favorite lust. Compromise is out of the question. Is it not a little one? will never be heard from his lips. Whatever he

discovers to be provoking to the eyes of the Lord's glory will be renounced. If it be a right arm, a right eye, dear as one's own soul, it must be cast away; it must be nailed to the cross, and there left to die as our Lord died, a lingering, painful, shameful, accursed death.

Finally. It is a divorce, not a temporary separation, that he seeks. Whatever constituted sin's claim to dwell with him, or rule over him, that must be extinguished. Never more shall his former lusts in his ignorance find a welcome in his bosom. It is henceforth consecrated as a temple of God, and contains no room, no not so much as a corner, for allowed retreat to his enemy. The expelled devil returns not to his house with seven spirits more wicked than himself. The voice of the Son of God, *I charge thee come out of the man and enter no more into him*, is peremptory, and Satan must obey.

What a marvellous revolution is here! The man's views, principles, habits, changed! Views, principles, habits, which had grown with his growth and strengthened with his strength!—to which he was strongly attached as his nature would permit! in accordance with which he not long ago sought his happiness! which he judged to be as firm as truth itself! All changed! Radically changed! Changed so as to hate what he loved and to love what he hated! By what process of reason was

it effected? What motives enforced, what efficiency ensured it?

Marvel not, my brethren! The secret is very simple, but its energy is all divine. The text contains it. The apostles succeeded; the gospel now so succeeds, by coupling with the doctrine of repentance that of the "remission of sin."

That men are sinners conscience dictates, but her dictates are dark, ill-boding, full of fears and undefined terrors. Hence all her suggestions are melancholy, sour, sullen, very apt to breed superstition, but of cheerful religion absolutely barren. Of forgiveness she knows nothing. This is the blessed discovery of the gospel; and plain as it appears to us, because the gospel hath put it in meridian light and glory, it would have confounded the angels of heaven to all eternity had they been asked whether there is forgiveness with God. It is one of his deep things which he hath revealed unto us by his Spirit. All we know or can know of it is from this revelation. Let us then inquire at the mouth of the Lord himself what is that forgiveness which he bestows and which he commanded his apostles to preach.

1. It is forgiveness or remission of *sin*, in which term we comprehend every offence of which God is the object. Now of this he alone is the proper judge. Its thanklessness, its malignity, the height, and length, and breadth, and depth of its evil, the

Infinite Mind only can measure. A creature can see and feel it chiefly in the penalty which God has annexed to it; and therefore a part only, and but a small part, can come at once under his observation. To the Eternal Mind, its hideousness and its horrors, from its first introduction through everlasting ages, are all minutely and exactly present. Now that he should be the only being in his own universe who should have thoughts of pardon! How good, how kind, how gracious! What an emphasis does it impart to his name! *The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, slow to anger, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin.* Verily, it sprang up in the bosom of his own love. Heaven would not have had the compassion, nor hell the impudence, to sue for our pardon. God *alone* shall be exalted in this matter; God alone is the *forgiver*. Let his great name have all the glory!

2. That remission of sin which the gospel proclaims is most *free*; it is forgiveness according to the *riches* of his grace. There is indeed something gratuitous in the very idea of forgiveness. It supposes in the forgiver the right of exacting his due, and of his waiving that right with respect to the person of the offender. Of course he must receive it as a free, unconditional gift. How could it come to us in any other way? Who among the sons of men, that rightly considers the case, can

have the hardihood to talk or think of *compounding* with his God? Whose mind is so profane as to insult him with the offer of his best deeds as a price for his favor? You might as well imagine that the gift of God can be purchased with money. Your good deeds, your virtues, your penitence! How much will they cover of the ground of your transgressions? Large and respectable as they may appear in your partial eye, what figure shall they make before him *whose eyes are as a flame of fire*? What but extort from your astonished lips that exceeding great and bitter cry, *We are all as an unclean thing, and our very righteousness are as filthy rags*. Yet here is the main difficulty with an awakened conscience; first, to persuade of the fact that there *is* forgiveness with God; next, to persuade it, his forgiveness is absolutely *free*. No point do the scriptures labor more—none do they set in a greater variety of lights—none exhibit in more various attitudes. They display—O let me speak of it with all reverence, for I have no other word!—they display the *anxiety* of the Holy One for what? Why, that sinful man may believe that he is merciful, and that his mercy is infinitely free! *Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die, O house of Israel? Turn, and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you, for I am gracious! Ho! every one that thirsteth, come to the waters! Come poor, come wretched; come with nothing to re-*

commend, with everything to disqualify you ; only come, and take the water of life *freely*.

3. The remission of sin is *full*. The covering is sufficient to wrap yourselves in, the bed is long enough for you to repose yourselves upon. He takes praise to himself that when he forgives, it is of *all trespasses*, and your gladdened hearts should re-echo the praise, *Bless the Lord, O my soul ! and all that is within me bless his holy name ;* who forgiveth *all* thine iniquities ! God is as really God in his forgiveness as in his vengeance. He will no more be compared with the children of men, with the sons of the mighty, in his grace, than in his severity. So indeed it must be if ever you enjoy the comfort of pardoned sin ; for if the divine forgiveness do not completely cover the whole ground of our transgressions—if it leave but one sin, original or actual, out of its provision—we have that one sin to answer for, and so no flesh should be saved. This one sin would be our unsheltered, our vulnerable point, in which guilt would thrust in his mortal dart. Oh ! it is our strong consolation, that when God forgives he forgives like God. *When he pardons he will abundantly pardon.* Go with your half-forgiveness, limited, conditional pardons, with reserves and limitations, unto the souls of men. It may be, it may become them—it is like themselves. That

of God is absolute and perfect, before which our sins are as a cloud before the east wind and the rising sun. Hence he is said to do this work with his whole heart and his whole soul—*χαρίζεσθαι*, freely, bountifully, largely, to indulge and forgive unto us our sins, and to cast them into the bottom of the sea, (Mic. vii. 19,) into the bottomless ocean, an emblem of infinite mercy. Remember this, poor souls, when you are to deal with God in this matter.*

4. The forgiveness of sins is final. In the justification of a sinner, God, the gracious one, pardons once for all—pardons forever! Pardon would be of no use to us, were it not irreversible: it would no sooner be gained, than lost. The Lord doth not so deal with his pardoned ones; give them just to taste the sweetness of his mercy, that their own sinfulness may the next moment fill their mouths with the bitterness, and their hearts with the horrors of the curse. His bounty is of another order altogether. His gifts and his calling are without repentance, i. e. unchangeable. His love is everlasting, and so is the life which he bestows upon them. They are united with his dear Son; their lives entwine with his life. Whatever reaches them to destroy them, must first kill their Redeemer: *Because I live*, is his gracious promise,

* Owen's 130 Psalm, p. 240, oct. Glasgow.

ye shall live also. They are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation; therefore they shall never perish. There is, there can be, no condemnation for them—they shall have everlasting life.

NON-CONFORMITY TO THE WORLD.

SERMON VIII.

NON-CONFORMITY TO THE WORLD.

ROMANS XII. 2.

Be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.

MANY of my hearers will take instant alarm from the uncourtly and unfashionable language of the text. They will assume, as granted, that they are to be lectured away from society, shut out from all the innocent and joyous freedoms of life, and persuaded to spend their days in the recesses of a nunnery, or the cells of a cloister. But softly: there are no nunneries nor cloisters in the Bible;

there are scarcely any in our country, and if there were ever so many, it would be rather hopeless to try the experiment of making converts of either sex from among this audience. Take heed, however, that your prejudices do not assail the word of your God; that you stop not your ears, and steel not your hearts against his counsels. You are here in his presence, and it may cost you your souls if you turn away from his admonition. It cannot indeed be denied, that his commandment and the principles of his children are infinitely at variance with a multitude of things which the world calls harmless; nor that it may appear to be your duty, your bounden, your imperative duty, to make a secession, even from the innocencies of the world, to take a firm stand, and to make a full stop, in a career plausible, popular, reputable, for which many ingenious things may be pleaded, but which are not fit for a Christian who is not of the world, but whom Christ hath *called out of the world*; let it be sulky, or cold, or abusive, as it pleases, and that without infringing at all upon your active duties, or upon your allowed, which are your greatest social comforts. Your souls are too precious to compliment away to your giddy neighbors, and eternal life too infinitely valuable to be put in jeopardy by your desire to please them. Then let us see what the apostle means by being *not conformed to this world*—what is that *transformation by the*

renewing of our mind, so zealously pressed upon us; and what is the connection under which he has placed it—that ye may know what is that good, and acceptable and perfect will of God.

I. Let us look at the nature of that *non-conformity to this world*, which the text enjoins.

This world emits a bad savor in the records of God. Wherein, in trespasses and sins, says the apostle, *ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience*. The course of this world, then, is directed by the prince of darkness; and in directing it, he employs all the faculties of their souls, and all the members of their bodies, *as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin*. The world is at this moment full of demoniacs: the evil one takes as complete possession of their persons, and abuses them to as ignoble purposes, as ever he did their bodies in the days of our Lord's humiliation—Oh that men who are estranged from God, would *believe* the terrifying truth! Yes, in that fair, and gentle, and courteous, and polished form, dwells the spirit that organizes all the rebellion against God, all the misery of man; all that he fears, and has reason to fear; and causes that lake of *fire and brimstone*, into which his intention is to plunge his votaries. Do you wonder, then, that the scripture has said, *whoever will be the friend of the world is*

the enemy of God. Under his evil control, the world, like a rebellious province, has set up for itself; and acts as if it were perfectly independent of the divine government. It has its own institutions, statutes, and customs—its own pursuits—its own ethics—its own penal code, and its own recompenses. It covers the very same ground which is covered by the law of God; but is, of course, perfectly hostile and contradictory both to the law and the Lawgiver. Here, then, is the cause and origin of all those injunctions of the scriptures, concerning our non-conformity to the world. It is in necessary and perpetual collision with the authority of our rightful Sovereign. Obedience to the one infallibly excludes obedience to the other. And it is most idle and ridiculous to attempt their conciliation; the very attempt proves its author to be an enemy to God, and a slave to the usurper.

The case, my friends, admits of but one alternative: you must either take your part with the world, and share in its guilt and condemnation, or you must *come out from the world, and be separate*, i. e. you must be Christians wholly or not at all. No middle character can be allowed. If you are not *for* the Savior, you must be *against* him. If you do not *gather with him* you must be numbered among those who *scatter abroad*. Neither the kingdom of heaven nor the kingdom of hell tolerates a neutral character. *If Jehovah be God, fol-*

low him ; and if Baal be God, follow him. But to halt between two opinions marks the feebleness of present indecision, and will only conduct to future ruin.

Yet it is not from all intercourse with the world that lieth in wickedness that the authority of Jesus Christ prohibits you. For then, as saith the apostle, *ye must needs go out of the world.* But in your separation from it you must show a character which the world never forms, and cannot understand ; must show that while you are *in* it you are not *of* it—that you do not love it—that your commerce with it is of pure *necessity*, and that you are going rapidly as time can carry you to that glorious home, where it shall never more show its face. You must be separated from and have no communion with those things which distinguish the world from the redeemed of the Lord, and which qualify you for the career of that graceless society whose *steps take hold on hell, leading down to the chambers of death.*

1. There must be a renunciation of the *maxims* of the world.

These maxims, without exception, centre in the creature, and are bounded by time. There is not one of them which regards an immortal destiny. *Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die,* is the sum of its philosophy. And were it true—did the spirit of man, like that of a beast, go down

ward—there is nothing to arraign its wisdom nor to demonstrate the prudence of a very different course. But if, on the contrary, we are immortal beings, than which nothing can be more certain, then to have all our principles of action shaped only to the requisitions of a mortal life, is the extreme of folly and madness; and the farther we can be from so great a delusion, the better for us. Now for example:

It is one of the maxims of the world, that if we are virtuous, i. e. if we render to every man his due, cultivate the mild and beneficent affections, do good actions, and are free from gross iniquities, it is enough. No more will be required of us by God himself, and we may sit down at our ease in the calm and undisturbed hope of unquestioned bliss.

Brethren, let me deal very plainly with you on this point, for it is in reality the rock on which a great portion of men make shipwreck of their souls; and I would observe that it confines all your accountability to the second table of the law, leaving the first, all your duties and your relations to God, unprovided for. Who knows not that amiable and beneficent tempers are an essential part of the religion of our Lord Jesus Christ? But who knows not that, separated from the connection under which his word has placed them, torn asunder from supreme love to God from which he has made them to spring, they are at best but a

milder form of rebellion against him? How often must you be reminded that mutual acts of kindness, the various good offices of life, are simply necessary to the existence of society among rebels, and that the man who may be most distinguished for them may himself be the most obnoxious rebel among the whole, and may be condemned for abetting and encouraging others in their rebellion? Was such a plea ever of any value before the tribunals of men? Has it not appeared that the most humane, beneficent, and even righteous among a band of transgressors, was himself a principal culprit? And did the abuse of these good qualities in the service of rebellion for one moment arrest the most condign punishment? And shall we impute to the perfect government of God a blunder which cannot find a place among the imperfect governments of men? Besides, what becomes of the rights of God your Maker? Where is the obedience to the first and greatest commandment, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind?* Is this to be trodden under foot with impunity? Are you to go all your lives long forgetful of the infinite good, and when called to account escape under the pretext that you were kind to rebels like yourself? Never to bestow a thought upon the eternal world, and to step as a matter of course into all its blessedness? Never to

have any concern about glorifying God here, and to be taken up from the mire of your pollutions unpardoned, unwashed, unsanctified, into the full possession of his glory hereafter? O more than sottish! Who hath bewitched you, children of men? And do I not speak to many, who, with the gospel of salvation freely and fully proclaimed in their hearing, have yet no other hope of divine acceptance than this absurd and stupid lie? Believe not the world. Her theology is not for sinful man. To behave decently on earth is no passport for heaven. It may do well enough among the blind and clumsy judges here, but will infallibly be detected by the keen-eyed righteousness beyond the grave. *That which is born of the flesh is flesh; but except a man be born of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.* Hope for no change, for no mitigation. If the Lord Christ speaks true, you shall find, when there is no rectifying mistakes, that every man of you who has all that the world pronounces enough, and has no more, will be forever shut out from the kingdom of God.

2. Where the world cannot succeed in expelling *religious* sensibility altogether, there is another maxim calculated to neutralize its power and render it ineffectual: "You need not be so strict; this great precision only does harm; it makes religion unamiable, and yourselves odious. Why cannot

you enjoy in moderation and with dignity the innocent freedoms which form the zest of society, and not put on that sombre air, and keep at so chilling a distance from all the relish of life?"

In this way do men contrive to make void the law of God by their manner of representation. To fear God and do his will, is "strictness" and "hurtful precision." To preserve tenderness of conscience, is to be "unamiable and odious." To follow the multitude, is to "enjoy with moderation and dignity only innocent freedoms;" and to avoid all appearance of evil, is to have "a sombre air and to keep at a chilling distance from the relish of life." So they wrap it up. To make short work of all these fair words and false pretences, do those who use them really love the law of God? and is it only against extravagant and fanatical excesses that they set their faces? Or is their opposition in very deed pointed at all that *holiness without which no man shall see the Lord*? Is it not precisely the image of God which they cannot endure, and his authority which they would gladly set aside? Would they not rob you of all the comforts of a good conscience? of all the sweets of a peaceful walk with God? and persuade you to exchange them for the giddy whirl, for the idiot laugh, for the midnight debauch, and whatever belongs to that mental and bodily dissipation which *is like the crackling of thorns under a pot*, noisy for a moment

and gone forever? Among the other things which form the “zest of society,” you must pollute your conscience, corrupt your morals, and dishonor *the glorious and fearful name of the Lord your God* by a little “innocent” gambling. You must also participate in that rational and elegant amusement which the abandoned and thieves select for their special entertainment, the play-house—all, lest your religion should appear unamiable. Were the Lord Jesus now on earth, should he not pass with our fashionable judges as morose, petulant, impertinent, a perfect stranger to polished manners, an enemy to all the cheerfulness and the graces of life? His apostle Paul would be derided as a fanatic; and John, the beloved disciple, would be pitied as a well-meaning enthusiast, endurable only because he was weak. In short, my friends, if you mean to be Christians, you *must walk as Christ also walked*. Your ears must be deaf alike to the open enmity and the hollow friendship of the world. You must have nothing to do with their plausible maxims—parleying is half a surrender. You must put down your foot decisively in the King’s highway, the way of holiness, in which *the elders obtained a good report*, and which is your short and only way to the kingdom.

3. When guilt, who pays no regard to etiquette, bursts in upon the conscience, raises his rugged voice, and reads his fearful lectures, the world has

another maxim to soothe him down and to keep all quiet within : " God is a merciful God ; we injure his name by ascribing harshness and rigor to him. He pities his poor, feeble creatures, compassionates their infirmities, takes delight in forgiving their faults, and will not be extreme to mark what is amiss."

How false and foul a conclusion, coupled with the most blessed truth that can sound in the ears of an awakened sinner ! He is merciful. The dimensions of his mercy, its height, and depth, and length, and breadth, it is not for the creature to scan. The gospel alone however has revealed it in all its magnitude and freedom. But it is not to that mercy as thus revealed that the world appeals. Jesus Christ and his merit and grace find no place among its maxims. The creed of the world and that of the Unitarians are perfectly agreed. Shut out the Saviour ; make no use whatever of him as *the way, and the truth, and the life* ; know nothing, believe nothing, say nothing, of that *new and living way which he hath consecrated by his blood*, and all the rebels together will be loud in their praises of the divine mercy. But all this cry about the mercy of God is to encourage sinners who continue in their sins. It has nothing in common with the salvation of our Lord Jesus Christ, who saves his people *from* their sins. It creates a deceitful hope, a lying persuasion, that a man may

live habitually neglectful of God, of his immortal soul, of his eternal interests, and after all have a just confidence in the divine mercy. Believe it not—shut your ears against so popular and fatal a delusion. It is not he who palliates, but he who confesses and forsakes his sins—he who turns from them wholly, impartially, forever, and turns his feet unto God's testimonies—that shall find mercy. Have as much as you please of this divinity of the world. It is reprobate silver; it will never make you rich unto everlasting life, nor buy one shred of clothing to cover your nakedness. The *blood of Jesus must cleanse you from all sin*; the righteousness of Jesus must be your spotless robe; the Spirit of Jesus must be your sanctifier; or in that great and terrible day of the Lord you have nothing to look for but to *be condemned with the world*.

2. To renounce in words the maxims of the world, will be of little avail, if we do not also renounce its practices.

The world has a method of forming a conscience of its own, and a moral law to correspond with it, so that whoever observes this law, however he may disregard and insult the law of God, is to be respected as a correct and honorable man. For example:

You may spend a life in utter forgetfulness of God and his worship—in the most positive unbe-

lief, and the most marked contempt of our Lord Jesus Christ—in habitual and even studious neglect of his great salvation, and every thing referring to its existence, and you never break the chain of your harmony with the world. These things give no uneasiness to a worldly conscience, nor disqualify you in the least for worldly honor and confidence. Nay, more: you may convert the Sabbath day, the day which the Lord emphatically calls his own, into a season for secular business, or carnal amusement—you may even profane the name of the Lord your God—you may bestow your highest affections upon as many idols as you can find places for in your heart—it breaks no scores with a worldly conscience, nor depreciates you in the least in the eyes of worldly men. If you live in a commercial country, you may defraud the government of its just dues—may make false entries of your goods. If your country be neutral, may furnish forged papers for your vessel, to suit either belligerent, as circumstances shall require; may crown the whole with some *hard swearing*, which old-fashioned men call *perjury*; you may break, as it is termed, may convey your property fraudulently out of the reach of its true owners; may bring multitudes of the poor, the widowed, and the fatherless, who trusted in your integrity, to the extreme of wretchedness—and when you have secured a human acquittal, by laws perhaps not a

whit more righteous than your own principles, may erect your crest, may turn round and look full in the face the very persons you have ruined; may insult them with the ostentatious display of your wealth, and receive not a hat the less. If you have spirit to carry the matter so high, you may disturb domestic peace, and then blow out the brains of the injured, for breathing upon your *honor*. The skirts of the world's conscience are very large, and its bowels of charity very strong, for all who side with it against the puritanical practices of *fearing God and keeping his commandments*. But now hear a moment what He who is to be your Judge hath said. *Be not deceived: Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.* His law is made, and its penalty enacted, *for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for liars, for perjured persons, for murderers, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine.* He has said that the *wicked*, whoever they be, by whatever names they go, and under whatever sanctions they may shield themselves, *shall be turned into HELL*; if you mean to take up your bed there and to know, by awful experience, what it is to *dwell with everlasting burnings*, why then go, *be conformed to this world*, and

divide its recompense. But if not, if you are set for another course, and for another issue, if you design to meet the Lord in the air, when all that belongs to the world will be poor and contemptible enough, then see, in the

II. Place, the necessity of the transformation mentioned in the text. *Be ye transformed in the renewing of your mind.*

Your speculative opinions, and your practical judgments, on those vital questions which affect your relations to God, and the salvation of your soul, must be exactly the reverse of the maxims and habits of this world. You must change sides : do it effectually, decidedly, visibly. You are to inquire, not what is fashionable, but what is right ; not what is reputable or passable among men, but what the Lord God hath spoken ; you must, in a particular manner, come out for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and for the truth which is according to godliness. Let me address a word to those who are sensible of their duty, and yet shrink from the performance of it. *How long halt ye between two opinions ?* If your opinion is fixed on the great matters of your eternal hope, of what are you ashamed or afraid ? Smothered regard our Captain disdains. Do not imagine that if you are really his disciples ye can escape detection by the world, or that it will spare you the more, or hate you the less. Wo be unto you if it should ! **Are**

you afraid, when you look around you and observe the mighty difference between the character of professing Christians, and the requisitions of your Divine Master, that you too, will one day fall back and bring a blot upon that *worthy name whereby ye are called*? It is a salutary fear; but may be worked up into a grievous temptation. It should inspire caution; not keep among the ranks of unbelievers, and apparently in the interests of enmity against God. To omit the plain duty of leaving the world that lieth in wickedness, is not the way to find freedom or peace. Cast your fears of falling upon him who has said, *my grace is sufficient for thee*; start from your lethargy and *run with patience the race that is set before you, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of your faith*.

And let these careless professors, whose lives lay a stumbling block before their more conscientious brethren, suffer the word of reproof and exhortation. You are justly liable to part of that same rebuke which our Lord gave to the Jewish lawyer; not indeed for *taking away the key of knowledge*, but to the other and severer part of his charge; *you go not into the kingdom of heaven yourselves, and them that would enter in ye hinder*. Is it not enough to dishonor the Saviour under the pretence of being his friends, but must you keep back others from honoring him? Are ye not satisfied with perishing alone—must you strive to make

your neighbors bear your company? Is the taste of their blood sweet to you? or will it be pleasant to sink down to death under the weight of their ruin, superadded to your own? rather seek to encourage them; to cheer their drooping hopes; to revive their fainting spirits; to *strengthen the hands that hang down, and confirm the feeble knees; and make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way, but let it rather be healed.* O how delightful to enter the palaces above, with a friend on either side! To hear a saved one, whom perhaps you never knew, acknowledge, if it had not been for this man's firmness, for that woman's tenderness, for yonder person's fidelity, I had perhaps missed my road, been led astray in the paths of the seducer, and had never been here? Think you that such things will not add to the lustre of your crown, to the intensity of your bliss, to the beauty of your heaven? As you value all the three, be persuaded by a close imitation of Jesus Christ, to help, and not to hinder others in the prosecution of their high calling.

This transformation must be by the *renewing of your mind*. Outward things alone will not do. *Bodily exercise profiteth little.* The resolution must be radical, and within the soul. That Holy Spirit, who is the vicegerent of Jesus Christ, must apply his power to create men anew; or after all their

reformation, their hearts will be still hankering after *the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life*. Trifle not with eternal things. Never imagine that what man can see and understand is enough. Though if you have not what he can see and understand, there is a fatal deficiency. *Your light must so shine before men, that others, seeing your good works, may glorify your Father which is in heaven*. But in order to effect so divine a result, *marvel not* if we perpetually ring in your ears that proclamation of the Master, *Ye must be born again!* Your faculties must be turned away from the objects of sinful pursuit, to the will and the work of your reconciled God and heavenly Father. Like the great High Priest of your profession, you must *delight to do the will of God*. Your affections too must be changed, and must change their objects. *If ye, then, be risen with Christ, to a new and holy life, seek those things which are above, where he himself sitteth at the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God*. In fine, this renewing of your mind will make you *spiritually minded, which is life and peace*.

III. The connection under which this non-conformity to the world is placed in the text demands your serious attention: *That ye may*

prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

So long as men live conformably to the course of this world, they labor under an incapacity, criminal indeed, but still an incapacity, of clearly perceiving what the will of God is, and especially that it is good and acceptable and perfect. The motives which govern them, the influences which act upon them, the objects of their preference, all conspire to draw a thick film over their moral vision. So that the most conclusive scriptural demonstrations do not operate with their proper force, nor can the strongest scriptural light make their way plain before their face. They still grope in the dark, and though *the light shineth in darkness, the darkness comprehendeth it not.* They still profess their honesty, avow themselves sincere inquirers after truth, and wonder that they come no nearer to a satisfying conclusion; or perhaps they do come to a conclusion, and equally wonder to find all the plain simple-hearted Christians in the world are against them. I have only to say, that one beam of the glory of God in Christ Jesus darting into their minds, will instantly put to flight this boasted honesty, this pretence of sincere inquiry, and make them see and own the inconceivable deceitfulness of their own hearts. Under the power of his renewing grace their vision is purified. The images which it forms are in their

proper place and position. Obscurities are enlightened, entanglements are unravelled, doubts resolved, and the wonder now is at the former blindness. The words of God have an evidence and an efficacy altogether surprising. The will of God there is no difficulty, generally speaking, of determining with the greatest precision; particularly all that revealed will which affects the substance of our faith, our duty, and our hope. They who believe his testimony the most firmly, receiving it upon his own authority as undisputed and indisputable truth, make the most rapid and eminent progress. They ask no questions but *what said my Lord unto his servant?* and they are enabled to perceive both what he does *say* and that it is *all good*, and of such a sort as must be *acceptable* when it takes place in them, and precisely that which suits their circumstances and promotes the end for which it was intended, being therefore every way *perfect*. It is just what they themselves would wish it. They have nothing to diminish, to add, nor to alter. They complain, indeed they have reason to complain, often and bitterly, of *sin that dwelleth in them*—of the *lusting of the flesh against the spirit*—of the *law in their members warring against the law of their mind*, and bringing them into captivity to the law of sin and death. But of the law, of the will of God, not a whisper of complaint—no lamentation.

breadth or strictness—none about its spirituality, *searching even to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit.* They know nothing of what some men call a milder form of grace. They ask for no dispensations, no relaxation. Their unanimous verdict is, that *God's commandments are not grievous; that the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.* With these views of the divine will, *they go from strength to strength, their path being that of the just, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day.*

Such, my brethren, is the non-conformity to this world enforced by the text, and such its fruits. Say, then, if there is not a most lamentable and ruinous difference between what we are and what we should be. Who is there that, like Enoch, *walks with God?* Who makes it his main study to be *conformed to the image of the first-born?* and inquires, conscientiously, into the state and progress of his conformity? Who *crucifies the old man with his deeds, the flesh with the affections and lusts?* If we were to judge from the appearance, and of professing Christians, we should certainly conclude that it is a part of their duty to be as unlike God and as like the world as possible. Look at their spirit; is it not the spirit of the world?—at their affections; are they not the affections of the world? at their pursuit; are they not the pursuits of the world?—at their law of morals; is it not the

world's law? Have they any better or higher motive or standard of conduct than the prevailing fashion? Away with evasion! Come to the matter of fact. How do you stand with respect to the law of God?—to the active faith of our Lord Jesus Christ? that faith which purifies the heart, and which works by love? Why do you turn pale at the thoughts of death? Why shiver with terror in the prospect of the judgment-seat and the judicial process? To a Christian actively engaged in his vocation, the *appearing of the Great God our Saviour* ought to be and is a *blessed hope*. Why does the very idea of it fill you with trepidation? Ah! my dear friends, be assured all is not right. There is something rotten and ruinous in your condition, and must be rectified if you would have a hope that shall not put you to shame. Rouse up, all ye who have any regard for your heavenly Master! Rouse up in his strength! shake off your indolence and the entanglements which enwrap you! Many of you are convinced, that to your own peace and to your Redeemer's glory it is necessary that the distance between you and the mere people of the world be greatly widened. Stifle not convictions while you repress the urgencies of duty. Do what the heathen sage advised a young man to do, *dare*—dare to snap your trammels—dare to be singular—dare to *obey God rather than man* You will lose

nothing either of comfort or of dignity. *The peace of God which passeth all understanding will keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.* The ministering spirits will descend from on high to help and honor those who honor God. He will himself cast his compassionate and complacent regards upon you, and will abundantly sweeten all the mortifications which may be poured into your cup. Jesus hath said, *Where I am, there shall my servant be also.* The full grace of which promise you shall enjoy in the ecstasy of your hearts when he shall take you to himself to be with him in safety; and you shall see the world with its gods, its glories, and its worshippers, consuming together in the last fire!

THE FOUNTAIN OF LIFE.

SERMON IX

THE FOUNTAIN OF LIFE.

JOHN VII. 37.

In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink.

THE blessed Jesus was ever employed in doing good. To save the souls of men was the benevolent purpose for which he came into our world, and which he continually prosecuted during the whole of his ministry. Love to our ruined race prompted him to leave the bosom of his Father, to empty himself of his glory, to become a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. With all the tenderness of faultless humanity, he sympathized with

even the bodily distresses of those whom he came to redeem, and lent a willing hand to their relief. But on their spiritual miseries his thoughts were principally set. Of these he saw perfectly the deadly nature and the alarming extent. To these he called perpetually the attention of men; for these he proclaimed himself a sovereign Physician, and offered freely his almighty aid. In this labor of love his life was spent. He omitted no opportunity of exercising it, and the same principle which animated all his kind and gracious actions now leads him to Jerusalem at the feast of tabernacles.

This feast, which God ordained to commemorate the travels of his people in the wilderness, where they dwelt in tents or tabernacles, was one of the three solemn occasions on which all the males of Israel were obliged to appear before God at Jerusalem. Accordingly vast multitudes resorted thither from every part of the land. The city, and especially the temple, was thronged. On the eighth, which was the last and greatest day of the feast, "it was customary for the priests to surround the altar with their palm-branches, and to pour out water in the temple, as an expression of the general desire of the Messiah's appearance, and the pouring forth of the Spirit by him." The Redeemer seized this occasion of claiming publicly the honors of his character, and inviting the Jews

to faith in his name. He ascends a small eminence from which he might command a view of the people, and be himself both seen and heard. How august the scene ! Was there ever such an assembly and such a minister ! The incarnate God preaches to the tribes of Israel ! How awful and venerable his aspect ! What majesty and love beam from his countenance ! What grace flows from his lips ! Be still every tumult ! be hushed every unhallowed passion ! be collected all wandering thoughts, while the Saviour speaks ! “ Look,” says he, “ from ordinances to the God of ordinances—from the symbol to the thing signified. Behold in me the accomplishment of the prophetic promise, *The Lord whom ye seek, shall come into his temple suddenly, even the Angel of the covenant whom ye delight in.* Are you longing for the Messiah promised to the fathers ? I that speak unto you am he. Do your thirsty souls need to be refreshed by the waters of the sanctuary ? I am the Fountain of life. *If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink.*” Happy nation ! had they known their privileges when the Lord of the temple was present in the temple and explained his own institutions !

But we must not confine to the Jews the Saviour’s grace. To all who enjoy the gospel he offers the same invitation. To us he cries, and we are warned not to turn away from him tha

speaketh from heaven ; to every one of us he cries, *If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink ?*

How rich, how free, how adorable his grace is, will appear from considering the persons invited, and the invitation itself.

I. Let us attend to the persons invited. They are the *thirsty*.

No man can be so senseless as to imagine that the Redeemer speaks of a bodily thirst. He is addressing sinners on the things which belong to their eternal peace, and as that great Prophet whom the Lord God had promised to raise up in the midst of Israel. The meaning of his language must, therefore, correspond with the importance of his object, and the dignity of his character. His words undoubtedly relate to the state of men's souls, and suppose that there is in the minds of those with whom he is dealing, an uneasiness and anxiety analogous to that painful sensation which arises from extreme thirst. The strong terms in which this state of mind is characterized, have induced the current opinion, an opinion adopted indeed, though very negligently, by even great and good men, that the Lord Jesus here invites none but such as are thirsting after an interest in his everlasting righteousness. How many of those who, driven from every other hope, were endeavoring to fix their trembling eye upon the Redeemer's atonement, have heard as a sentence

denounced in thunder against them, this interpretation of the text ! “Alas ! I fear that I have not the spiritual thirst which is here required, and am therefore excluded from the gracious warrant,” has often been the language of exercised people. These are certainly included, but they may not monopolize the warrant : and in truth they are frequently the first to decline it, as not belonging to them. If the words imply any thing, they imply that those who have never yet drunk of the water of life which is in Christ as in a fountain, may come and drink. But surely, they who have learned the vanity of every portion but a reconciled God—who have learned that it is Christ Jesus alone by whom the reconciliation is effected—who have learned to renounce every refuge of lies, and count all things but loss and dung that they may win Christ, and be found in him, not having their own righteousness, are already quickened by the Spirit of grace and truth ; have already been refreshed from the fountain of living waters. While, therefore, the text encourages such to apply continually to the fulness of the Redeemer, let us not restrict its freedom by appropriating it to them alone. Christ does not say, “If any man thirst for righteousness—for deliverance from the guilt and power of sin—for communion and fellowship with God, let him come unto me or else let him stay back ;” but simply, and in the most unqualified manner, *If*

any man THIRST, let him come unto me and drink. Is it necessary to prove, that there is in mankind, universally, a principle which brings them all within the compass of the gracious offer? The fact is as clear as noonday. They all thirst, and insatiably too, they thirst for happiness. This, indeed, is a propensity congenial to the soul, and coeval with its existence. It was implanted in man when God *breathed into his nostrils the breath of life.* It was intended to answer the most exalted end, by leading him perpetually to God, the uncreated source of bliss. When he fell, the propensity remained, but the direction was lost. The moment man left the way of God and duty, he left the way of peace and joy. His understanding is so blinded that he knows not how to find it again. His strength is so enfeebled that he is unable to re-measure his steps, to re-mount the heights of glory from which he fell—and his will and affections are so depraved, that he is not more unable than unwilling to return. From this sad condition of doubt, disquietude, helplessness, and misery, his thirst for happiness impels him to flee. He gropes, he struggles: but he gropes at midnight. He struggles with obstacles which he can neither remove nor surmount. Bewildered in the dreary mazes of an inextricable labyrinth, without light to cheer, without a clue to guide him, he wanders from creature to creature; and after all his labor and all his

toil, finds himself as far as ever from the object of his wishes. Deplorable situation! He can do nothing but tread the same insipid, lifeless, hopeless track. Fainting with thirst, he can find nothing to revive his drooping spirit, nothing to cool the fever of his tongue. Utterly ignorant of God and his consolations, he knows not where or how to obtain that grace which alone can relieve him from his trouble. But his necessities are not silent. Ten thousand wants lift up their voices, and send their cry to the very heavens. Pitiably, my brethren, is the note of wo: and so importunate was the entreaty of human wretchedness, that the Son of God, out of pure compassion, left the throne of his glory, and clothed himself with mortality, that he might apply a remedy to our otherwise incurable evils, and deliver us from becoming the victims of eternal death. In consequence of what he has done and suffered, he has opened a fountain of living waters, and invites all poor sinners, who are perishing with thirst, whether they believe it or not, to come and drink. That you may be more firmly convinced of this delightful truth, turn to the beginning of the fifty-fifth chapter of Isaiah's prophecy, and there you will see that a similar invitation is extended to every one who hears the gospel, even though he totally disregards the great salvation which it reveals. *Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come*

ye, buy, and eat ; yea, come, buy wine and milk, the choicest blessings, without money and without price, without merit or recommendation. Mark what follows. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread ? and your labor for that which satisfieth not ? Do they who are seeking Christ Jesus, spend their time, and their talents, and their labor, in pursuing vanity ? Assuredly not ! There cannot be a more exact description of those who seek every thing else but Christ ; and therefore he adds, with infinite tenderness, Harken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. And in the same unlimited manner he speaks in the text, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink.

Having seen who are the persons invited, let us now attend,

II. To the invitation itself.

Since human misery was designated by the metaphorical term, *thirst*, the remedy to that misery is very properly exhibited under the idea of *drinking*. The command of Christ is, therefore, nothing else than a command to receive from him all the happiness our souls can wish. As if he had said, " Miserable men, who are searching for happiness, but have missed the way, expect not from the creature that solid and permanent enjoyment which is to be found in the Creator alone ; quit the broken cisterns which can hold no water ; come to

me; I only am the portion of the immortal soul; my fulness is abundantly adequate to gratify your largest wishes; come, take, taste, drink, and live forever. *He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.*

Without insisting on a number of remarks which naturally occur on this copious and interesting subject, let us direct our attention to the following important truths, that are plainly inculcated in the text. That Christ Jesus requires perishing men to place their confidence in him only. That his salvation is exactly fitted to their necessities—and that it is freely offered.

1. Christ Jesus requires perishing men to place their confidence in him alone.

It is a principle uniformly taught in the scriptures—a principle which cannot dwell too frequently upon our recollections, nor too powerfully affect our hearts—that the great Redeemer is the only hope of sinners, and therefore in this, as well as in every other invitation of the gospel, he keeps out of sight every thing but his glorious self. The new covenant is so constituted, that let men view it in any direction they think proper, the first object which meets their eyes is the divine Head of the covenant; and of all the blessings with which this covenant abounds, though immense in their magnitude, infinite in their number, inestimable in their

value, the soul can neither enjoy nor see any, till faith not only look but enter through Christ the door. Accordingly, the chief and favorite theme of the gospel is the Lord Jesus. Mark his own invitation in the passage before us. What instructions does he give to poor sinners who are dying with^h thirst? Does he bid them first to drink as much as they can from the polluted waters they may have in themselves, and if they be not then satisfied, to come to him and supply the deficiency? Or, to strip the text of metaphor, does he bid them do what they can to obey the divine law, and when they find their righteousness inadequate to answer its high demand, to come to him and receive from his righteousness so much as will make up the defect of their own, and render the compound an oblation worthy of God's acceptance? No such thing! Christ declares to men their misery; he declares himself their Saviour, and not a syllable do we hear of their own righteousness. This indeed is a doctrine very unpalatable to the unrenewed nature, and rouses into opposition all the enmity of the carnal heart. But it is among the first lessons in the divine life, and if we do not effectually learn it, all our other learning is of trifling moment. Little do sinners know the indignity they offer to the Son of God, and the injury they do to their own souls by endeavoring to associate themselves with him in the work of their

redemption. Brethren, deceive not yourselves. Christ will not give his glory to another. He will not share with you the honor of your salvation. He must have all the praise, or he will have none. You must depend entirely on him or entirely on yourselves. Christ is the way, and the only way to the Father and to everlasting life. You must be either wholly in this way or wholly out of it. There is no medium. You cannot combine the old and new covenants, and climb to heaven partly by one and partly by the other. If you please yourselves with such an idea, shame and destruction will be the end of your hope. Foolish men! Abandon the vain attempt! You must tear Jehovah from his throne before you succeed. And what do you intend by this mad behavior? Is not the righteousness of Christ sufficient? Is it not perfect? Is it not spotless? Do you think that this glorious robe cannot beautify, nor cover, nor secure you, unless it be patched with the filthy rags of your own righteousness? If the Lord Jesus will adorn you with his righteousness, you may well part with your own, and you will be infinite gainers by the exchange; for,

2. His salvation is exactly fitted to your necessities.

In forming an estimate of these necessities, we may not credit the report of our own hearts, for they are *deceitful above all things, and desperately*

wicked. We must appeal from their partial sentence to the judgment of *the law and the testimony*. Now what account does the divine word give of men in a natural state? It represents them as spiritually dead—as covered with defilement and loathsomeness—as far from God and hope—as unfruitful in righteousness, and in consequence of these things like briars and thorns, whose end is to be burned. What eye that looks back upon the original beauty, and dignity, and bliss of man, and surveys the dread havoc that sin has made, can refuse a tear over the ruins of our pristine glory? What eye that looks around, and sees no arm to deliver from these depths of disgrace and woe, will refuse a flood of tears at the gloomy prospect? But let the sigh of anguish be turned into the shout of joy, for Jesus the deliverer comes, and salvation, complete, everlasting salvation, is in his hand.

He saves from spiritual death. *And you hath he quickened*, says the apostle, *who were dead in trespasses and sins. The hour is coming*, said he to the Jews, *and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live*. He sends forth his Holy Spirit and breathes upon the dry bones, and flesh and sinews come upon them, and life enters into them, and they stand up upon their feet. He gives them to drink of the river of the water of life, not merely a temporary draught, which may relieve them for

a moment and fail them hereafter, but imparts it in such abundance that they never again thirst. He bestows upon them that precious faith which unites them inseparably to himself, and forms a channel through which streams from his fulness flow perpetually into them, and flow so copiously as to send forth from themselves rivers of living water.

Farther, Christ Jesus not only quickens but sanctifies. Sanctification is indispensably necessary to fit us for seeing the Lord, for relishing the employments of heaven. But ah! how polluted is the unrenewed soul! Hear how Jehovah himself describes it: *As for thy nativity, in the day thou wast born thy navel was not cut, neither wast thou washed in water to supple thee; neither wast thou salted at all, nor swaddled at all—but thou wast cast out in the open field to the loathing of thy person.* (Ezek. xvi. 4, 5.) And there mightest thou have lain and perished forever, had not the Redeemer had compassion on thee. Yet even from this pollution mayest thou be washed in the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness. The Lord God has promised to all who credit his testimony respecting his Son, *I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you.* But this purifying water can be obtained only in Christ Jesus. All who are now in glory, without a sin-

gle exception, *washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.* Here too must you be washed or you must die. 'Tis the unchangeable decree of an unchanging God. And be not discouraged. The diseases of the soul, though terrible beyond conception, are not so noisome and inveterate as to baffle the healing energy of this sacred fountain. The blood of Jesus cleanses from all sin, and it can cleanse from yours, though it equalled the united pollutions of all the redeemed who ever lived or shall live hereafter.

By performing in our favor such miracles of mercy, our Almighty Friend restores us to the divine image and approbation, brings us near to God, and inspires us with the sweet hope of everlasting life. Holiness is the divine image, and God must love what is like himself. True, our highest earthly attainments are stained with many a blot, and cannot abide the severe scrutiny of Him who chargeth his very angels with folly. But personal holiness, though it forms the lineaments of the divine image on the soul, and is our qualification for heaven, is not our title to it. This is the imputed righteousness of our Redeemer. We have nothing to do with God but in Jesus Christ, neither has God as a God of mercy any thing to do with us but in Jesus Christ, and we are complete in him. In his righteousness, and therefore in his

people's righteousness, not even Jehovah's eye can discern a blemish. Thus, in receiving him by faith, we who once were afar off are brought nigh by the blood of his cross—nigh in the acceptance of our persons with God—nigh to him as a reconciled Father—nigh in fellowship and communion with him. We have boldness and confidence in approaching his throne of grace, for every step in our way to the mercy seat is sprinkled with the blood of our great Paschal Lamb; and shielded by the faithfulness of him who cannot lie, we are perfectly safe from the blow of the destroying angel. Tell me, ye who are strangers to the Saviour, how do you expect to obtain access to the living God? Lay the word of truth before you—lay your hands upon your hearts—listen to the monitor within, and say, is not the plan which brings you near by Christ Jesus, a glorious plan? Children of deception, who look for this privilege from any other quarter, be assured that if God is true, your *hope shall be as the spider's web*, and your *confidence shall lead you to the king of terrors*.

But to those who trust in his merit and grace, the kindness of our great High Priest goes still farther. He does not only quicken and sanctify their souls and bring them near to God, he also frees them from the reproach of unfruitfulness.

The human heart is naturally a dry, a barren, a rocky soil—not one heavenly temper, not one

good disposition, can flourish there. All the graces of the divine life are plants of foreign growth. They are rooted in the soul *by* none but Jehovah the Spirit, and *in* none but those whom he savingly unites to the Lord Jesus. Here again we see the fitness of Christ's salvation to our wants. Is there present, a sinner whose heart is so hard and barren that not one holy thought can spring from it? Thus runs the rich promise, *I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground. I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring; and they shall spring up as among the grass, and as willows by the water-courses.* (Is. xliv. 3, 4.) Let the heart be hard, let it be stubborn and impenetrable as the flint, the streams which issue from the fountain opened for the house of David pierce and soften and fructify the most unyielding and barren soil. Then faith and all the kindred graces strike deep their roots, spread wide their branches, unfold their blossoms, diffuse their fragrance, and bear much fruit to the glory of God. Nor is this an honor and a happiness of short duration. The righteous do not resemble those plants of rapid growth, which start almost immediately from the seed into maturity, and as quickly fade and die. They are like the palm-tree, stately, majestic, permanent—like trees planted by the rivers of water, which bring forth their fruit in their season, and whose leaf doth not

wither. Thus they continue, ripening by grace for glory, till Christ transplant them into the paradise of God. Here, therefore, let me introduce the last remark on the fitness of his salvation.

It was observed, that in consequence of their guilt, their pollution, their distance from God, and their unfruitfulness, sinners are like briers and thorns, whose end is to be burned. Dreadful idea! *Who can dwell with devouring flames? Who can dwell with everlasting burnings?* This is all we can expect on our own account, yet from this tremendous fate the salvation of Christ, and that alone, can deliver us. The moment we draw the breath of life, the curse of a violated law seizes and binds us with chains too strong for the might of all the angels in heaven, and reserves us as criminals for the day of slaughter. But our great Redeemer bursts these chains, looses this iron grasp, sets the captives at liberty, and puts into their mouths a song of triumph. Faith in his precious atonement is not only connected with the important blessings that have been mentioned, but secures to their happy possessors an unfailing title to eternal joy. For by this faith we have *our fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life*. Christ cannot disappoint the hope of them who trust in him, and he hath said, *Whosoever believeth on me hath everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day. Who, then, shall lay anything to the*

charge of God's elect? Shall God that justifieth? Who is he that condemneth? Is it Christ that died? Yea rather that is risen again, who also sitteth at the right hand of God. Reprobate the suspicion, and be persuaded, that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate believers from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Adorable salvation! Who would not wish to partake of it? Who would not exult in the faintest dawn of hope that they *may* partake of it? "But what shall we give, what shall we do, to purchase an interest in it?" Give! Do! Misguided men! Nothing. It is not only treasured up in Christ Jesus—it is not only adapted in the most glorious fitness to all your wants, but in the

3d. Place, It is *free*, absolutely free. And bless God that it is so. Did it require anything to be merited on our part, we might bid an eternal adieu to heaven and happiness. The salvation of Christ cannot be deserved. Infinitely precious, its value surpasses all desert. Everything about it is infinite. It saves from infinite guilt, infinite pollution, infinite wrath, and infinite wretchedness. It confers on all who enjoy it, infinite dignity and infinite bliss. All the works of all sinful men, from the beginning to the end of time, could not merit the smallest portion of it, The best services of the unregenerate

are iniquity, and deserve to be *punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power*. If you are resolved to merit at the hand of God, you shall get, indeed, what you merit; but it will be in hell. The new covenant has no conditions to be performed by us. These were fulfilled by Christ the Mediator. It is, therefore, to us a covenant of grace. But if you think that you must merit something to put you in possession of its blessings, you change its very nature—you transform it immediately into a covenant of works, and then, as the apostle says, *grace is no more grace*. “But must we not repent before we may come to Christ?” No! you can never repent as you ought, till you be interested in his love, and influenced by his Spirit. The tears of true repentance flow from the eye of faith. *They shall look on me whom they have pierced, and shall mourn*.

“Are we, then, to be furnished with no qualifications that may fit us for receiving the gospel salvation?” None but the utter want of every good quality. Christ Jesus *came not to call the righteous*; he did not expect to find men so; he expected to find them *altogether filthy*, and therefore he came to call *sinner*s to repentance. Tell me, ye who strive to wed the covenant of works with the grace of the gospel, if a man were lying, panting, fainting, dying with thirst, so feeble that

he could not move a limb to help himself, and if some kind friend were to carry him to a pure and wholesome stream, and to put the water to his lips, would he merit anything by drinking it? 'Tis just so, brethren, with the salvation of Christ. Unconnected with him you must perish! And you are so far from being able to do anything to merit an interest in the blessings of his purchase, that you cannot perform a single action which will be honored with the approbation of God, till you drink of the water of life, and your souls be invigorated by its quickening efficacy.

These, my friends, are important truths; and in bringing them by a close application home to your own consciences, the first question that occurs is, Have you drunk of these living waters which are in Christ Jesus? Too many of you, I fear, if they will act honestly, must reply, that till this hour they have never tasted them. With such of you, my brethren, I have some weighty business. God sent you into this world to glorify him: and as you are sinners, he requires you to glorify him by believing the record he has given of his Son, and securing your happiness by thus obeying his will. Has this been your employment? Far, very far from it. You have been seeking happiness, indeed, with the most unwearied perseverance. But have you found it? Your conduct declares that you have not. Why else, ye young, ye giddy

and ye gay, why this perpetual round of amusement and vanity? Why do ye run from one enjoyment to another, and studiously avoid conversing with yourselves? Why labor to outstrip, in a race of folly, the close pursuit of a vexing conscience? Why endeavor to banish from your minds every settled thought about an eternal world? Is it not because that world wears a gloomy appearance, because all beyond the grave is dreary and cheerless? Ye young, ye giddy, and ye gay, be faithful to yourselves. Lay your hands upon your hearts, and own the truth. Have you not sometimes felt in your own souls, a vacuum which all your amusements could not fill? Has it not sometimes happened, even in your most heedless moments, that reflection, an unbidden and unwelcome guest, has stolen into your bosoms, and whispered the alarming suggestion, that all is not right? Is it not this which makes the idea of God, eternity, heaven, and hell, to trouble you? Is it not this which sheds a freezing terror through your souls? Or are you so benumbed as never to be conscious of such emotions? God grant that you may awaken from this deadly sleep before you open your eyes in that place of torment where the Lord hath forgotten to be gracious, and where his tender mercies are shut up in his wrath.

And you, who, more advanced in years, are sick of the frolic of youth, and plunge with ardor into

the busy scenes of active life, has happiness taken up her abode in your breasts? If strangers to the Redeemer, you cannot say so. ' Why else strive to join house to house and field to field? Why form plan after plan, and scheme after scheme, to augment your wealth and honors and grandeur, in the hope of more complete and contented enjoyment? Why be so dejected at the failure of your projects or at the other ills of life, and seek in the gratification of sense relief from the gnawings of an anxious mind? Your acknowledgment may not correspond with the language of the fact, but the fact speaks truly, and declares plainly that the acquisitions of manhood are as unable to satisfy the soul as the trifles of early days. Do not pretend that you labor only for future days, nor flatter yourselves with the expectation of spending quietly and peaceably and happily the evening of your age. To old age be our appeal. Say, hoary sinner, who hast passed through youth and riper years, and approached the confines of eternity, where is thy happiness? The turbulence of passion may have subsided—the vexations of active business may be over—and in these respects you may possess a tranquillity. But if the turbulence of passion has subsided, if the vexations of active business are over, the capacity of enjoyment is also gone. State, then, fairly, both sides of the question, and you will find that you have nothing left.

What now strengthens the feeble knees and lifts up the hands that hang down? When the grasshopper is become a burden—when the shadows of the night grow large and long—when the sprightliness of youth has vanished and the vigor of manhood failed—when the king of terrors lifts his unerring arm and threatens to strike the blow which will shatter to atoms thy clay tabernacle, and hurry its lingering inhabitant to the tribunal of God—what revives the fainting spirit? The streams of earthly consolation are already dried up, and wilt thou yet hug to thy bosom, with unavailing fondness, the wretched remnants of its fleeting joy? “O more than sottish!” Be persuaded, all of you who are unacquainted with the gospel, to abandon the hope of finding happiness in created comforts. You are perpetually disappointed, and yet continue to deceive yourselves by imagining that if you miss your object here, you will meet it yonder. But when you arrive at the longed-for spot, the airy phantom eludes your embrace and mocks your hope. But do not blame the creature, nor think I mean to blame it. The creature is your friend. The creature bears a testimony for God. Eternal truth has told you, that nothing below can be a suitable portion for the immortal soul; and that when you betake yourselves to the creature in this view, you flee to *a refuge of lies*. All the creatures re-echo the important monition, and

loudly cry, *It is not in us!* Quit then, quit immediately these *broken cisterns, which can hold no water.* Haste with the speed of men who know that eternal glory is the depending stake—haste to Jesus, *the Fountain of living waters.* Here *taste and see that the Lord is good.*

Ye young, ye giddy, and ye gay, listen to the voice of the great Redeemer, who tenderly invites you to the heavenly draught. The water which *He* gives will effectually quench that fearful thirst which must afflict you whilst you are unacquainted with his grace. It will abundantly repay every sacrifice he requires you to make; for it will be in you *a well of water springing up to everlasting life,* and he requires you to renounce nothing but what is really your misery and will prove your ruin. Not only the word of God asserts, the experience of ages also demonstrates, that *Wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths peace.* Ask the Christian and he will inform you, that, let the devil and the world and the corrupt heart say what they will, there is beyond all controversy *peace and joy in believing.*

Let those who are in middle age reflect seriously on the indispensable necessity and inestimable value of this water of life. My friends, you must drink or you must perish, and the salvation of Christ Jesus will not only secure your own souls, but will extend its divine influence to every cir-

cumstance and every relation. Are you blest with comforts? This is the embalmer of joy. Are you harassed with anxious solicitude? This is the sweetener of care. Are you visited with trials? This is the cordial of affliction. Is the favor of God the truest dignity and only bliss of man? This will wash you from all your pollution and render you fair in his sight. O shut not your eyes upon your own mercies! *Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation. To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.*

Are there here any old persons who have never embraced the glorious Saviour? My brethren, your guilt is great, and as your glass is almost run, your day of grace cannot be long. Yet even you, who are at the eleventh hour, are entreated to come and drink of the water of life. You have much reason to be terribly alarmed, but none to despair. The rich warrant proclaims, *whosoever will, let him come.* Start from your stupid lethargy and flee at this critical moment to the Saviour of souls. He can save even you, for his grace is sovereign, and it is almighty. If you cast yourselves upon it, all shall yet be well. You are come near to that dread valley, where burning sands swallow up the shallow rivulets of earthly comfort. But the streams that flow from our Rock, Christ, will follow you through these sands—will accompany you into the dark and dreary vale of the

shadow of death—will support, and strengthen, and cheer your spirits, till you arrive in safety and triumph at the celestial Canaan.

Is any one saying in the bitterness of his soul, "Oh that I could obtain a draught of this divine, this living water! I see, I feel, that all the creatures, though well suited to answer the end for which they were given, are too gross in their nature, too limited in their extent, and too short in their duration, to satisfy my vast desires. I see that sin has ruined me, that I cannot help myself, and that without Christ I am lost forever. O that he would visit me with his mercy!" Are these your views, your fears, your wishes? Then to you, in a peculiar manner, is the word of this salvation sent. If Christ has made you sick of sin, it is the most pleasing symptom that he has begun to draw you to himself; and you may soon find, to your unspeakable joy, that he has drawn you much farther than you can now believe. It is the sweet pledge that he will send his word and heal you, that he will set you in a large place, and enable you to shout the praises of your redeeming God. Be not discouraged by your weakness, for *a bruised reed he will not break, and smoking flax he will not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory.* Let not your guilt terrify you, for *though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow;*

though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. Think not the stain of your filthiness too deep to be washed out, for the *blood of Jesus cleanseth from ALL sin.* *Fear not, only believe.* Throw yourself upon his sovereignty, lay hold upon his promise, *Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.* Say not, "I would, but cannot, hold fast of the promise." Your own ability is out of the question. You are not to consider what *you* can do, but what *Christ* can do. None embrace the gospel offer but they whom he enables to do it; and whenever a poor sinner stretches out his frail trembling hand towards the free promise, Christ incloses it in his own hand, and clasps it round the promise in so firm a grasp, that neither earth nor death nor hell can ever loose it. *Trust, then, in the Lord forever, for in this Lord Jehovah there is everlasting strength; and they who believe on him shall never be confounded.*

Finally. Let all the disciples of Jesus, who have been drinking at the fountain of living waters, be careful not to undervalue their privilege, nor to throw contempt upon its adorable Author. Christians, have you, as the children of God, free access to the pure streams of uncreated bliss; and will you so injure your own souls, and dishonor your Redeemer, as to grovel in the polluted and poisonous waters of sinful pleasure? Shrink with hor-

ror from the idea ! Have you, as the children of God, free access to all the fulness which is treasured up in Christ Jesus, and will you ever be at a loss where to apply for the relief of your wants ? Let it be your study to improve this unspeakable gift of God. His nature, his attributes, his names, his covenant, his promises, his ordinances, are to his people so many *wells of salvation*, and their faith is never rightly employed, but in *drawing water from them*. The graces of the divine Spirit cannot divinely grow unless they be divinely cherished. The new creature is of heavenly birth, and must be nourished with heavenly food. As well might you expect that an infant should advance to youth, to manhood, to age, without continual supplies of provision, as that you should grow from babes, to men and fathers in Christ, without the perpetual aids of his Spirit and grace. Why do Christians become languid and faint ? Why do they yield to temptation ? Why are they vanquished by indwelling sin ? It is because they so unfrequently visit the fountain of living waters. Let us learn, my brethren, to live not so much upon what we have received, as upon what Christ has to give. *Be strong*, says the apostle, not in the grace which is in yourselves, but *in the grace which is in Christ Jesus*. Relying upon his all-sufficiency, we shall find that *they who wait on the*

*Lord, and they only, shall renew their strength ;
they shall mount up with wings as eagles ; they
shall run, and not be weary ; they shall walk and
not faint.*

THE GOSPEL OFFER

SERMON X.

THE GOSPEL OFFER.

JOHN VI. 37.

Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.

THESE words are part of a most interesting discourse which our Lord addressed to a number of his hearers, whom, shortly before, he had miraculously fed. Highly delighted with such an abundant, cheap, and seasonable supply, when they were worn out with fatigue, and fainting through hunger, and hoping, it seems, to be again feasted, by the repetition of the miracle, they soon renewed their visit to the Saviour. The Lord Jesus immediately saw, (for how could Omniscience not see?) the baseness of the principle by which they were

actuated. *Ye seek me*, said he, *not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves and were filled*. Not because your souls were lost in astonishment at the power, and your hearts melted with the love, of God, displayed in my ministration, but because your animal senses were gratified. My brethren, would to God there were not ground to fear that many who now profess the name of Christ, are governed by no better motives.

The Redeemer, however, who lost no opportunity of doing good, did not neglect to improve the present occasion. After discovering to these people his profound knowledge of their hearts, he leads their views from temporal to eternal things. from anxiety about their bodies, to concern for their souls. Under the metaphor of bread, he opens up his mediatorial character and office, illustrates the spiritual nature of his salvation, and strongly inculcates their absolute need of it. The farther he advances in his important instructions, the closer he brings his doctrine to their consciences. Having pointedly charged them with unbelief, that he might at once alarm their fears, and humble their pride, he solemnly tells them, *All that the Father giveth me shall come to me*; and to encourage their hopes, he adds, *Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out*. Can tongue express, can heart conceive, the glory, the riches, of this precious promise? On this promise, many

who are now singing the song of Moses and the Lamb, once hung their fainting spirits, and it carried them safely through guilt, through temptation, through death. Is its freedom restrained? or its grace diminished? or the power of the Promiser abridged? No. It is made by the same Saviour, to the same kind of sinners, and conveys the same invaluable blessings. It holds up to the most daring offender, who will avail himself of the offer, a free, a full, an irrevocable pardon. It infolds in its spacious bosom all the benefits of the everlasting covenant—all that man can receive, or God bestow. Can any human heart remain insensible to such wondrous condescension? Can you hear with indifference, that Jesus, the Prince of life, the Lord of glory, stoops so low as to present such sweet invitations to the chief of sinners? O that *He who has the key of David, who openeth and no man shutteth, and shutteth and no man openeth*, would send forth his light upon those truths which will demand your attention, while we inquire what is meant by coming to Christ, and endeavor to unfold the annexed promise.

I. We are to inquire what is meant by coming to Christ.

To come to Christ is, in general, to believe in him; and to believe in him is to “receive and rest upon him alone for salvation as he is offered in the gospel.”

This coming to Christ supposes several things.

1. That we are by nature strangers from God, and feel the misery of our destiny. While our first parents continued in their integrity, they were honored with free access to their Creator ; but the breach of their fidelity ruined this divine privilege, and produced in their minds an alienation from their God. His righteous judgment made their choice their punishment, prohibiting them from that intercourse with himself which they labored to shun ; and the flaming sword of the cherubim, and what is more terrible, *the decree of justice*, barred up forever all approach to Jehovah by the old covenant. That this is our forlorn condition, and that there is no possibility of approach to God acceptably but by the new and living way which the Redeemer has opened, the very nature of his mission and his earnest invitation declare. Approaching to God by Jesus Christ supposes that we feel our distance from him, and farther, that we feel the misery of our estrangement. I need not tell you that when Adam fell he lost not only his dignity but his happiness. His mind, which was filled with light, serenity, innocence, bliss and joy, became the abode of darkness, inquietude, guilt, wretchedness and sorrow. He has transmitted to us the doleful inheritance. Offenders in our offending parent, *we are by nature children of wrath*. By losing the favor of God we lost our all ; we

were degraded from his children and friends into the children and drudges of the devil. The temple of the Lord of hosts is converted into a den of thieves. A crowd of fiends, attended by every vile and hateful affection, has entered the soul of man. Enmity against God headed the gang, and the standard of rebellion is erected in that very spot which was once the palace of the King of kings. Can such a state be happy? Can it possibly not be miserable? God is the pure and only source of blessedness, and wo and death are as invariably the effects of distance from him, as darkness and cold, of distance from the sun. But a considerable part of man's misery is, that his apostasy has blinded his eyes and deadened his sensibility. He sees not that sin has robbed him of his beauty in defacing the image of his God. He sees not that sin has obliterated his fair title to eternal life. He feels not that sin, like a venomous reptile, is gnawing his vitals and infusing a mortal poison. These things, however, he must know, or he will not, he cannot, come to Jesus Christ. It is his office to save sinners, and to save *from* sin. But surely they who discern neither danger in the state nor deformity in the character of a sinner, and who roll sin itself "as a sweet morsel under their tongues," will not, while under the influence of such views, think the gospel salvation any favor. Nobody, who is not conscious of a disease, will

thank you for a remedy. It is, therefore, the first work of the Holy Spirit to *convince of sin*. In this work he rouses the conscience from its torpitude—he quickens the soul into life—he opens the eyes that were shut in spiritual death—he unmasks the sinner to himself—but ah! how great the alteration! Like a palsied limb which on the recovery of health feels the acutest pangs shoot through every nerve, the sinner now finds himself inconceivably wretched. He finds himself under the curse of a broken covenant, and therefore exposed to the vengeance of an angry God, exposed to the horrors of everlasting ruin. As the human mind is engaged in a perpetual search after happiness, the first question on such a discovery will be, how shall I escape the destruction which threatens me? It is more than probable that, unacquainted as yet with the wiles of Satan and the deceitfulness of his own heart, a person in this condition will betake himself to the law, which in its original form said, *Do and live*, and try to help himself by his *good works*. He will form resolutions of amendment, and fondly hope to atone for the folly and guilt of his past by the wisdom and sanctity of his future conduct. But if the Lord intend to be gracious to him, he will not be allowed to trust in that *refuge of lies*. The Holy Spirit will show him that if he stop there, he is undone

forever ; and therefore coming to Jesus Christ supposes, '

2. A sense of our utter inability to assist ourselves.

Under the divine instruction men learn wonderful lessons. The sinner had been convinced that he was guilty, he is now carried a step farther, and sees that he is filthy. His eyes are turned inwards upon his heart, and he is made acquainted with facts of which he had not the least suspicion, when he was told by the divine word, he would not believe what is proved to be too true, *that he is all as an unclean thing*—that his *very righteousness*, as he had simply imagined them, *are as filthy rags*—that his heart is a nest of abominations, *a cage of unclean and hateful birds*. His loathsomeness in his own sight and in the sight of a holy God, who is *of purer eyes than to behold iniquity*, added to his danger, renders him doubly miserable. He gets a glimpse of the infinite evil of sin. He is sensible that nothing short of a spotless obedience to the divine law will be accepted by the Lawgiver. He is sensible, too that a satisfaction must be made for the innumerable instances in which he has violated its precepts. What can he do? Were he to obey perfectly hereafter, all his obedience is a *debt*. There is no surplus to satisfy for past offences. But instead of giving perfect obedience, he is incapable of per-

forming *one* acceptable action. Sin is so mingled with all he does, that his best deeds, the 'incense of his purest offerings, are *a smoke in Jehovah's nostrils*. And to put the finishing stroke to his self-confidence, he is obliged to subscribe the humiliating doctrine which tells him, that the broken law spreads its broad curse over his very righteousness. In the anguish which these views must excite, no wonder that he despairs of helping himself—no wonder that he is troubled and terrified with the apprehension of a God absolute and unreconciled. He can enter into the spirit of that passionate exclamation, *What shall I do to be saved?* The business, however, is not finished. The Lord is tearing him from the old root, but has not yet ingrafted him into Christ the living Vine. He has hitherto looked only at the high demands of God's law, and his own unworthiness, weakness, and vileness; but he has not looked at the blessed Mediator. Coming to Jesus Christ supposes then,

3. A view of him as that very Saviour whom we need. When the soul is sinking under the weight of guilt, and every moment fears that the black cloud of divine wrath will burst over his devoted head, how reviving, how transporting the thought, that the *blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin!* This precious truth, my brethren, is the only thing which can revive the dying hope of a convinced sinner. A Saviour! Delightful

sound! A Saviour who has made an atonement for sinners! May I depend upon this heavenly information? Yes, for *his blood cleanseth from ALL sin*. What! from *all* sin? Will it cleanse from *my* sin? It will. In the mingled emotions of wonder and joy, a sinner cannot but long to be better acquainted with this celestial Friend. He opens the volume of inspiration, and there he obtains all the intelligence he can wish. He is told that in the glorious Redeemer there is a fulness to relieve every want. Does he find himself debarred by the flaming sword of justice from approaching to God by the old covenant? He is told that Jesus Christ is the new and living Way to the Father. Does he need a justifying righteousness? He is told that Jesus Christ has *brought in an everlasting righteousness*. Nay, that he is himself *the Lord our Righteousness*. Does he need strength? He is told that Jesus Christ is the Lord our Strength also. Does he need to be purified from his pollution? He is told that by pleading the merits of Jesus Christ he may expect the accomplishment of that gracious promise, *I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean; from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you*. Oh! my brethren, how does a sight of glorious Christ tarnish all other glory! It sickens a man to the covenant of works—it makes him say of the covenant of grace, of

which Jesus Christ is the Surety and the Head, *It is well-ordered in all things and sure; it is all my salvation and all my desire.* But as a bare sense of the suitableness of the Mediator is different from surrendering ourselves up to him, coming to Jesus Christ is,

In the last place, the rolling of our guilty souls, with all their vileness and all their unworthiness, upon his rich sovereign grace.

When a man, into whose mind God hath shined so as to give him an insight into the great things of which we have been discoursing, looks at himself and sees nothing but death there—when he looks at the law and sees nothing but death there—when he looks at the creature, and sees nothing but emptiness and barrenness and death there—when he looks at Jesus Christ and sees in him light, and life, and grace, and all the fulness of Deity, he cannot but say, in the prospect of going away from Christ, *Lord, to whom shall I go? thou hast the words of eternal life.* He reasons as the lepers of old, “If I sit here, I die; if I go back, I shall die; if I push forward and make an experiment of his grace, I can but die.” These exercises are the suggestions of the blessed Spirit. They terminate upon a *whole* Christ, upon Christ in all his offices. With these exercises, and with *the everlasting arms underneath him*, the sinner casts himself down at the feet of Jesus. Happy,

thrice happy they, whose souls are exalted into such humility—who willingly lay their honors in the dust, and set the crown upon the Redeemer's head. Nor is this the characteristic of a few ; it is the common temper of all God's children—a temper which you must have, if you ever see his face in peace.

To prevent poor sinners from thus coming to the Saviour, Satan leaves nothing unattempted. When he cannot lull them any longer in a state of security, he commonly endeavors to persuade them that they have sinned away their day of grace, and that Christ will not receive them. But *he was a liar from the beginning*. Fear not, trembling soul ; impudent as he is, you may stop his mouth. He cannot, blessed be God, he cannot erase from your Bibles the gracious declaration of the text, *Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out*. The unfolding of this promise is the

II. Topic to which your attention was invited.

Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out, i. e. I will undoubtedly receive him. I will not cast him from me *now*—whatever has been his past character—whatever the aggravations of his guilt—whatever are his present fears—whatever the temptations of Satan, I invite him to the arms of my love ; I promise him a welcome reception.

This however is not all. Jesus will not only

admit you into his favor *now*, but he will not cast you out of it *hereafter*. Those whom *he once loves he loves to the end*. He gives to all his people *eternal life*, and *they shall NEVER perish*—no future backslidings, no provocations, will induce him to forsake them utterly. If they *break his statutes, and keep not his commandments, then will he indeed visit their transgressions with the rod and their iniquity with stripes*. If, like refractory children, they attempt to run from home, he will scourge them back to their Father's house; but he administers his corrections with a parent's hand; he intends to teach them how bitter sin is—to make them live more by faith, and nearer himself. His chastisements are no proof that they have lost the privilege of their adoption, for *nevertheless*, says he, *my loving kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail*. And why not? Because of their good behavior? That would be a dreary doctrine. Far otherwise. *My covenant*, he adds, *will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips*. (Ps. lxxxix. 31, 34.) And a clause of this covenant is, *I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me*. (Jer. xxxii. 40.) *Therefore there is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus*. As a consequence, it follows that those who come to Christ he will not cast out of his kingdom of glory. The connection between faith in the Lord Jesus

and eternal life is as infallible as God can make it; we can no more disjoin them than we can separate truth from the divine nature. And this is a principle so clearly revealed in your Bibles, that it would be needless to attempt its proof.

Pause then a moment, and ask yourselves what an immortal being can wish that the Redeemer does not promise in the text? Say, is it not your wisdom, is it not your honor, is it not your happiness, to surrender your hearts and devote your lives to this heavenly Suitor? What greater wisdom than to secure that good part which shall not be taken from you? So that, happen what will, all shall be well with you. What honor should be so ardently courted as that of becoming the sons of God?—of shining in the robes of imputed righteousness?—of wearing through eternity a crown of glory? What happiness like that which lies in Jehovah's favor? for it is life, and his loving kindness is better than life.

“Precious blessings! but we dare not contemplate them only at a distance. We have so often turned our backs upon them and their adorable Author, that we fear there is no hope for us,” may perhaps be the language of some present. Why, my friends, why indulge such a fear? You have all the encouragement imaginable to believe that he will freely pardon even *your* transgressions, and adopt you into his family.

For, in the first place : The salvation of sinners is the object and the business of his mediation. *The Son of man is come to seek and save that which was lost.* For this very purpose he was set up from everlasting and commissioned into our world; nay, it is so peculiarly his office that he received *his name* from it. *Thou shalt call his name Jesus, because he shall save his people from their sins.* Who are his people? Certainly they to whom *he gives power to become the sons of God.* And who are these? *As many as believe on his name.* Stretch forth, then, the withered arm; endeavor to lay hold on his covenant; let your hope lift up her languishing head; for the Redeemer is never employed in work more suitable to his character than when he confers on such as *you* the blessings of his grace. You have, therefore, nothing less to animate your souls than the express design of the scheme of salvation, and all the perfections of God, which are pledged for the security of those who embrace it.

2. As it is the business, so it is the delight of the Lord Christ, to save even the *chief* of sinners. It was in the prospect of this blessed work, that when the council of peace was held in eternity, *he rejoiced in the habitable parts of the earth, and his delights were with the sons of men.* The conversion of a sinner produces great joy in heaven, and the first smile brightens on the countenance of the

Son of God. This heavenly personage, this incarnate God, is never so much grieved, nor considers himself treated with so much indignity, as when sinners refuse the offers of his love. If they will not listen to his expostulations, he leaves them with regret. *How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? How shall I deliver thee, Israel? How shall I make thee as Admah? How shall I set thee as Zeboim? Mine heart is turned within me; my repentings are kindled together.* (Hos. xi. 8.)

The Lord Jesus is well pleased to be employed by sinners in transacting their eternal interests. Be persuaded to put your souls, and all their concerns into his hand. You cannot commit them to a better, nor a more faithful agent. You cannot find a more powerful friend, nor a more effectual pleader. He is minister plenipotentiary in the court of heaven; and they whose cause he undertakes, shall undoubtedly succeed. Rob not the Saviour of his glory, but let your redemption add a new trophy to the triumphs of his grace.

3. He has actually saved sinners as unlikely as yourselves to obtain his favor. The scriptures tell us of a Manasseh, whose murders made the streets of Jerusalem run down with innocent blood, and who, nevertheless, became a wondrous monument of redeeming grace. They tell us of a Mary Magdalen, in whom dwelt seven devils, and yet they could not prevent a gracious visit from

Christ. They tell us of a Paul, who was a persecutor, blasphemous, and injurious, *but he obtained mercy*. They tell us of those who were guilty of crucifying the Lord of glory, and yet this blackest of guilt was washed away in the blood of sprinkling. Were you to enumerate the vile abominations which have disgraced and rendered miserable our nature, and to present the list to the redeemed in heaven, how many would say, "And such were *we*!" Oh, sinner! the path you wish to tread, has been trodden by millions before you, and *like* you. You injure the freeness and fulness of the Redeemer's grace, by hesitating a moment about his willingness to save you.

4. Christ has told you—in the text he tells you, that he is as willing, as he is able, to save to the uttermost, all that come to God by him. And where has he contradicted himself? *Him that cometh to me*, is the unlimited proclamation, *I will in no wise cast out*. Nay, he has gone farther; he has not only said, he has *sworn*, and sworn by himself, (the most solemn oath that God can take,) that he will not reject you. But by your questioning his willingness you give him the lie; you believe the devil and your own deceitful hearts, and believe them at the expense of Jehovah's truth. Away with this false humility. It dishonors God, and is fraught with poison to your own souls. It is the most inveterate enemy the Re-

deemer has—seize this traitor and nail him to his cross. The great Mediator has promised to receive you. That is enough—take him at his word. He has put no qualification in his warrant—see that you put none there. Fix your eye upon his atonement—bring his promise to his throne, plead it there, “Lord, do as thou hast said.” Such a cry has never been, shall never be unanswered; it pierces the third heavens, and brings Jesus to the relief of the soul. And in all your supplications, remember that the salvation of Christ is absolutely *free*; a quality which it could not have if it excluded any who are willing to submit to it. There is not one way to life for little, and another for great, sinners. Are your iniquities heinously aggravated? Then you have more need of the Saviour! Then the honors of his love will be more magnified in your salvation! Then you will be more deeply indebted to his grace! The redeemed will all shout, but you will shout upon a higher note, *to him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood—be glory and dominion forever and ever.* (Rev. i. 5, 6.)

As the whole of this discourse has been practical, the improvement shall consist in a very few obvious reflections.

1. If coming to Jesus Christ implies the several things which have been mentioned, it highly concerns all who have hitherto lived contented with a

mere profession, to realize their misery and their danger. My brethren, you seem to forget that a *form of godliness* will not save your souls. All who have any respect for the system of divine truth, profess to believe, though the conduct of too many belies their creed, that there is no salvation detached from faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Now what will it profit you, that this precious principle is inscribed in every page of your Bible, and has a place in your understandings and memories, if it do not, by the blessing of God, deeply affect, and thoroughly renew your hearts? Let me ask you, and let conscience, as in the presence of Jehovah, put home the question, Have you felt yourselves wretched, aliens from God, children of wrath, under the curse, and obnoxious to the vengeance of his holy law? Have you found yourselves polluted, your power to do good entirely lost, and inherent depravity contaminating and poisoning, like the pestilence, what you once imagined your best works? Have you utterly despaired of doing any thing to relieve yourselves from your woful condition? Have your minds been illuminated to see the glory of the Redeemer's person, the suitableness and the necessity of his offices; the freedom and the fulness of his grace? Are you pleased with the plan of salvation; that wondrous plan which puts the crown upon the Mediator's head, and lays your honors and your impor-

tance prostrate in the dust? Have you surrendered your hearts, and consecrated your lives, to this almighty Saviour? If you are his people indeed, if you are the just expectants of a happy immortality, you certainly know something of these things. If you do not, it is to be hoped you will not dare, in virtue of a mere profession, to seat yourselves, to-morrow, at the table of the Lord. Allow me, my friends, to deal plainly with you; and do you deal plainly and honestly with yourselves. The table shall be spread, but only for the children of the kingdom—the Master comes, but he calls not for you—you have not the wedding garment; you have no invitation from Zion's King to this feast of love; and at your peril be it, if you go uninvited. Nay, if you know nothing of those exercises of the soul on which our reflections have dwelt this evening, you are not only unbidden to our gospel repast, but the whole of your religion is a dead form, an empty shell, a religion for this world, and it will attend you no further than this world. It will leave you at death, when you will most sadly need comfort and support. *Be not deceived: God is not mocked. If any man be in Christ, he is a NEW creature. You MUST be born again*—you must have a justifying righteousness, and sanctifying grace; without this *no man shall see the Lord*. Without this no splendid profession, no extensive knowledge, no exalted privileges, wi.

benefit you in the most trying hour. All these you may have, and yet go down to the grave with a *lie in your right hand*. O that you were wise to know, *in this your day, the things that belong to your peace*.

2. Will Jesus Christ reject none who come to him? then all who perish, perish by their own fault. Christ and all the benefits of the everlasting covenant are now offered to the chief of sinners. To every one in this assembly, whatever his character, whatever his crimes, the free promise of eternal life is presented. Nay, wherever the joyful sound is heard, the gracious proclamation announces peace and pardon through the blood of Jesus. By this blood a fountain is opened for the house of David, and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem. *Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters! Whosoever WILL, let him come and take the waters of life freely!* Whatever, therefore, you may pretend; however plausible the excuses by which you satisfy your consciences while you despise the blessed Saviour; the truth is, (for He who cannot lie hath said so,) *You WILL NOT come to him that you may have life*. You are, then, your own destroyers; and at the awful appearance of your Judge, guilt will stop your mouths; or should you attempt to speak, your mouths will condemn you. The Lord now waits to be gracious; but remember, that if you persis-

and die in your unbelief, *there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, but a certain fearful looking-for of judgment and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversaries.*

3. Since Jesus Christ will cast out none who come to him, let it be your care, Christians, to live by faith upon him. May the most inveterate rebel against God look for forgiveness and acceptance through the Mediator's atonement? and shall not his children, who are already justified by that atonement, have boldness and confidence in their approaches to his throne? You have many corruptions to subdue—many trials to sustain—many foes to resist—and therefore, if you expect to succeed, you must have many errands to the throne of grace. And be not now strangers at that throne—spread before it all your weaknesses and all your wants. Pour out, into the bosom of your Father, all your anxieties and all your griefs. Do you feel your lusts strong, and your graces weak? Do not spend your time in lamenting your feebleness, but betake yourselves to him who is not only the Lord your righteousness, but the Lord your *strength*. Does your great adversary seem to be let loose upon you? Does he, as a ravenous lion, terrify you by his roarings? Does he, as a skilful and malicious enemy, discharge into your souls his fiery darts? Run instantly to the Captain of your salvation—he has an arm that is

full of power. In our text he has pledged himself to secure you; and as he cannot deny himself, his faithfulness will be your shield and your buckler.

Have you acted treacherously towards your Lord? Have you grieved him by backsliding from him? And has he, in righteous indignation, withdrawn from you the light of his countenance? Humble yourselves under his mighty hand, but do not mistake the meaning of his providence. He chastens, because he loves you. He says, with inexpressible tenderness, *Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings.* Answer his call, *Behold! we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God.* (Jer. iii. 22.) Whilst the tear of ingenuous shame starts in your eye, fix it on his everlasting righteousness—let your trembling hand again lay hold of his covenant—bow at his footstool—plead his promise—you shall not be disappointed, for it is a truth more stable than the heavens, that *them who come to him he will in no wise cast out.*

THE GOSPEL NO CAUSE OF SHAME.

SERMON XI.

THE GOSPEL NO CAUSE OF SHAME.

ROMANS I. 16.

I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.

ZEAL for the glory of his Divine Master was the most prominent feature in the character of the apostle Paul. Hurried away by the blind impulses of ignorant superstition and inveterate malice, he had formerly persecuted with unrelenting fury all who named the name of Jesus. The account which he gives of himself exhibits the most hideous picture of frantic impiety. *I verily thought with myself that I ought to do many things contrary to*

the name of Jesus of Nazareth. Which thing I also did in Jerusalem; and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to leath I gave my voice against them. And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities. (Acts xxvi. 9, 11.)

Under these circumstances, who would have thought, according to human judgment, that the conversion of Paul was a probable, not to say a possible, event? Assuredly, had he been governed by worldly motives, we never should have heard of him as a Christian, far less would his name have shone with such splendor on the list of apostles. But what obstacles can arrest the power of Christ, or prevent him from bringing to himself in the moment of love the *chosen vessels* of mercy. No sooner does divine grace take possession of the soul than the heart of stone melts—the fury of persecution subsides—the murdering sword is cast away—the first breath of penitence cries, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?*—Saul the persecutor becomes Paul the apostle. With an ardor proportioned to his former enmity, “he now preaches the faith which once he destroyed”—he plants the standard of the Messiah in that very city which witnessed his rebellion, and was the scene of his

cruelty—he glories in the cross of Christ—he sees clearly all the dangers which attend such a profession, and all the calumny and odium which are heaped upon those who make it. But unappalled by danger, unmoved by calumny, he throws to his adversaries the gauntlet of defiance. “Why,” says he, “should I blush for my Redeemer? Let them blush who never saw his glory nor felt his love. But *I*, who know both, *am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ*; and I have the best reason not to be ashamed of it, *for*, let men reproach it as they please, *it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.*”

In this noble testimony which Paul gives to the gospel, he speaks with the warmth and eagerness of a man who felt its importance and certainty. Enlarged views of the gracious scheme it unfolds impressed him with the deep conviction that it alone can bear the weight of an immortal soul. Enraptured with the heavenly prospects it opens, not only in this world but beyond the grave, his heart glowed with fervent gratitude to their adorable Author; and unable to repress his devout affection, he cries out, *I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ.* This was not more the heroism of an inspired apostle than it is the temper of all believers. They have in their own bosoms the same divine principle which animated the faith and hope and magnanimity of Paul. 'Tis true, in

them it may not be equally active, nor its operations of equal extent; but the principle they have and must have. Born of the same Father—united to the same Redeemer—guided by the same Spirit, they must have the same disposition. However weak their faith, however faint their hope, however dead their frame, it is their “unaltered wish” to glorify their Saviour. And could you see their inmost souls, you might read there, in very legible characters, *I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ*. Too often, indeed, their actions are wholly inconsistent with their character and sentiments. They shrink from the frown or sneer of *a world that lieth in wickedness*. But of this timidity they ought to be ashamed. It is the fruit of their unbelief—the badge of their folly—the chastisement of their sin.

That they may not be left to act so unworthy and ungrateful a part should be the constant study and prayer of Christians; and they will find the subject of our present attention fraught with sweet and powerful motives to *hold fast*, not merely their faith, but *the* PROFESSION of their faith, without *wavering*; for it naturally leads us to take a view of the gospel of Christ—to notice some of the reasons for which carnal men are ashamed of it—to display the Christian temper by showing what is comprehended in *not* being ashamed of it—and to illustrate the argument by which the bold profession of it is defended.

In prosecuting the plan which has now been proposed, and depending upon that gracious aid, without which we can do nothing, let us,

In the first place, take a brief view of the gospel of Christ.

Gospel, as is commonly remarked, signifies *glad tidings*; and the term is appropriated, with peculiar propriety, to the revelation of divine mercy as it is manifested in Christ Jesus.

The gospel well deserves to be termed *glad tidings* in a variety of respects, as it answers to complete satisfaction the most important questions that man can ask. It resolves our doubts about the nature and character of God—about the dispensations of his providence, about a future state, about the misery of our present condition, and about the method of our recovery.

1. The gospel of Christ informs us about the nature and character of God.

That man, who was created in the divine image, and honored with the divine favor and communication, should so fatally degenerate as to forget the first lesson which was taught to his species, a knowledge of the God who made him, is not a more melancholy proof of his depravity than it is a part of his misery. Credulity itself could scarcely have believed that human reason, which originally was pure and clear, should be so debased and blinded as to mistake entirely the nature and

plainest attributes of God, and to ascribe any of them to the creatures of his hand. But the fact is unquestionable. The dreadful apostasy of our race plunged us into such woful ignorance, that we groped in darkness, even at noon-day. I should abuse your understandings should I attempt to prove that the heathen world was overspread with the grossest superstition and idolatry. I should waste your time in recapitulating the opposite opinions which were entertained of God, not only by the multitude, but also by the greatest philosophers. Whether there is one great and glorious Being, who centers in himself all the perfections of Deity, or whether these are distributed amongst more than one, is a question about which the philosophers hesitated, and which the vulgar decided in favor of Polytheism. Such a decision must necessarily draw after it a train of fatal errors respecting every part of the divine character, and every relation it bears to us. Its practical effects are briefly, but elegantly and strikingly summed up by our apostle when he tells us, in the close of this first chapter of the epistle to the Romans, that men *changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things, and worshiped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever.* Even they, who, a little more enlightened, condemned idolatry, and

were inclined to favor the doctrine of the unity of God, were much at a loss concerning other matters of the highest moment. Is God a Spirit? Is he the author of evil? If not, is he so necessarily holy that he must punish sin? Is there any possible way of escaping his righteous indignation? Will he certainly bring us into judgment for all our actions, or only for some? Does he take notice of our thoughts? How is he to be worshipped? Ought we to worship him at the hazard of mistaking the acceptable mode, and thus bring upon ourselves new and accumulated guilt; or ought we to omit it altogether? On these and other important questions the wisest of the heathens said the least; and they who were most positive most frequently erred. So truly does the apostle say, that *professing themselves to be wise they became fools*, and that *the world by wisdom knew not God*. From this frightful state of doubt, suspense, and perplexity, the gospel of Christ delivered the world. It chased away the clouds which wrapped in darkness the human mind, and poured upon the gloom of midnight a flood of day. This gospel declares that God is One. *Hear, O Israel! the Lord our God is ONE JEHOVAH*. It also declares *how* he is one, in revealing to us the mystery of the adorable Trinity—the wonderful mystery of three equal divine persons subsisting in one undivided essence; a mystery of dread importance, of which the know-

ledge is absolutely necessary to our eternal happiness, but which mere reason never could have conjectured, far less discovered. The gospel declares that "God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, unchangeable, in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth." In his *being*, and therefore as he could have no beginning, so he can have no alteration nor end, but must continue the same, in all the glory of his nature, *to-day, yesterday, and forever*. In his *wisdom*, and therefore all things, even the most secret thoughts, are open to his sight, and shall all be conducted to the best and noblest end. In his *power*, and therefore the determinations of his wisdom can never be frustrated, but shall certainly be carried into complete execution. In his *holiness*, and therefore he cannot be the author of evil; he must hate sin with a perfect hatred; he cannot allow it to pass with impunity, but must punish it as infallibly as he is God. In his *justice*, and therefore while he supports the dignity of his laws and the rights of his government, and vindicates the honors of his character, his decisions must be according to truth, and so perfectly equitable as to shut the mouth of every offender. In his *goodness*, and therefore we may be assured that *he does not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men*; that the innocent cannot suffer; that they who do suffer must be sinners, and the authors of their own

misery ; and that there is here laid a foundation on which even the guilty may hope to be delivered from the condemnation to which their consciences tell them they are liable, provided the deliverance can be effected in a consistency with all the divine attributes. And in his *truth*, so that neither his promises nor his threatenings can possibly fail.

Farther, the gospel of Christ declares that God is to be worshipped—that he is to be worshipped in spirit and in truth ; secretly and openly ; that to neglect this duty is death ; and that it cannot be acceptably performed, but in the mode prescribed in the revelation of the covenant of grace.

As the account which divine revelation gives of the nature and character of God, far exceeds, both in value and extent, all the accounts to which uninspired philosophy can pretend ; so the marks of decided superiority are stamped with equal clearness upon the account which it gives of the government of God. I therefore observe,

2. That the gospel of Christ affords us true and interesting views of Divine Providence.

How great was the confusion and perplexity of the acutest observers of the moral world, when, unaided by revelation, they attempted to develop the mysteries of Providence : and how vain were all their efforts to extricate themselves from their difficulties, can be a secret to none who are ac-

* acquainted with the state of mankind before the promulgation of the gospel. That God, the Creator of the universe, governs it with unerring wisdom, almighty power, and unceasing care, is a proposition so plain to those who know their Bibles, and with which conscience so immediately closes, that we are apt to imagine no man can refuse, for a moment, his cordial and unhesitating assent. Yet even this proposition, all clear and commanding as it is, was much controverted by pagans of old, and, as if God meant to stain the pride of human reason, it is controverted at this hour by many who reject the scriptures of truth. Amongst the heathen, Divine Providence was a subject which seldom occupied the thoughts of the vulgar, and about which the wise were perpetually quarreling. Some denied, in the gross, God's creating power and goodness. Some, though they ascribed to him the power of creating, were for excluding him entirely from governing, the world; fondly and impiously dreaming that all things are driven at random by blind fatality, or blinder chance, and that God concerns himself neither in human affairs, nor in any thing else. Others, measuring Infinite Wisdom and power, by their own ignorance and feebleness, and unable to comprehend how a single mind can attend to the varied, and multiplied, and intricate affairs of a universe, wished to rid the Deity of fatigue, and contrived to par-

cel out the world amongst a number of divinities, to each of whom they assigned a peculiar province. And the few who, more sound in their judgments, and more sober in their inquiries, admitted God's superintendence over the works of his hands, and labored to shun the dangers of a contrary opinion, were yet puzzled and confounded by the occurrences of every day. When they adverted to the different classes and characters of men, they felt that to reconcile their situations, in the common course of events, with a good, a wise, an equitable providence, was a task too hard for their deepest thought, and most diligent research. If anything is to be gathered from a general notion of God's character, and the first dictates of reason and conscience, it is this general maxim, that evil ought to be punished, and good rewarded. But when men, guided by the mere light of nature, turned their attention to the actual administration of Providence, how awful and disheartening was it to find, that this leading character of an upright governor was apparently contradicted by almost every act of his government. When they saw iniquity at ease, and prosperity taking up her abode in the dwellings of the wicked—when they saw plenty open her treasures, and pour upon their heads her choice, her balmy blessings—and honor crowning their lives with her most flattering distinctions; especially when they saw, on the other hand, that

men, to their discernment unblemished in their characters, and venerable for their virtues, were frequently reduced to struggle with the complicated ills of life—to languish under disease, or pine in poverty—to become the victims of oppression and falsehood, or to sink beneath a load of injuries; when they observed these things what could they say? Renounce the doctrine of a providence they could not, without renouncing their reason; and they could hardly retain it without renouncing their senses. Who will help them in this sad dilemma? Who will answer a question like the following? “Do not such dispensations look like a bounty on crimes and a penalty on innocence?” The difficulty is great and serious: it is so great that reflection upon it staggered the faith, and almost overturned the steadfastness of one who was favored with divine revelation. *Verily*, said Asaph, in the agony of his soul, *Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocence.* (Ps. lxxiii. 13.) Nor were his doubts removed, nor the rebellion of his heart subdued, *till he went into the sanctuary of God.* As for those who had not revelation, the only thing which could in the least alleviate their painful anxiety, is the idea of future retribution. But this idea, as we shall hereafter see, was at most the trembling conjecture of a probable fact, and by no means the firm and solid conviction of an undoubted reality. But had the

conviction been ever so firm, difficulties which we cannot now mention, still remained. If philosophy was required to solve them, she shrunk from the unequal attempt; or if she undertook it, it was only to betray her feebleness, and to mock the expectation of her followers. But here, when every human resource failed, the gospel of Christ stepped in, and with all the dignity and ease of heavenly truth, untied those gordian knots which bade defiance to the ingenuity of man. I do not mean to say that the gospel disclosed all the secrets of the divine government. There are many things which we may not, should not know. Things of which the knowledge is graciously concealed from us, as it could serve no purpose but to render us miserable. There are many things which we could not know. Things so deep and mysterious as to be far beyond the reach of any created intellect. And therefore, intruding curiosity may start a thousand difficulties which no mortal can remove. But this is no prejudice to the gospel. Its discoveries are adapted, with infinite wisdom, to our circumstances. It unfolds so much of the plan of Divine Providence as is necessary and useful—so much as may justify, even to our frail understandings, *the ways of God to men*—as may teach the wicked the most alarming lessons—as may strengthen and animate the faith, and hope, and peace of the believer.

The gospel informs us, that as God *created all*

things for himself, so he upholds them by the word of his power, and rules them by the counsel of his will. It informs us that he framed in eternity, the plan of all his operations; and that Providence is nothing but the gradual development of this plan, at such seasons, and in such degrees, as to his wisdom appears fit—that the plan is unalterable in itself: I am Jehovah, I change not; my counsel shall stand, says he, and I will do all my pleasure—that it is so infallible in its execution, as not to be hindered for a moment by any impediment whatsoever; for he doth according to his will in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, what dost thou?—that it is so boundless in its extent, as to comprehend all things, even objects the most minute, and incidents apparently the most trifling. The hairs of your head, they are the words of our Redeemer, the very hairs of your head are all numbered; and a sparrow shall not fall to the ground without your Father. That nothing can happen but in a subserviency to the end which God has in view—that all second causes, though operating in different ways, and even though hostile in themselves to this end, are combined effectually to promote it. Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee, and the remainder of wrath thou wilt restrain. The gospel bids us not to wonder if we cannot account for many proceedings of the Governor of

the universe, since his *way is in the sea, and his path in the great waters, and his footsteps are not known*. It bids us not to be stumbled if we see the *wicked spreading like a green bay-tree*, high in power, and wantoning in plenty; because this is not the way in which God expresses his approbation and favor, as his word declares, and innumerable facts prove: for nothing is more certain than that inward happiness is far from being a necessary attendant upon outward prosperity, and because wise and valuable purposes are accomplished by this dispensation. Were God to cut off immediately the notoriously wicked, he could not bring all his sons to glory, many of whom are to spring from them, and are to receive, and love, and honor that Redeemer, whom their fathers rejected, and hated, and vilified. In the mean time, he makes them, though they know it not, the instruments of building up his church, and by loading them with benefits, he renders their impiety the more inexcusable, their guilt the more flagrant, and his justice in punishing them the more conspicuous. If, in righteous indignation, he sometimes scatter their wealth, and stain their honors, and blast their prospects, and bring upon them the swift and fearful recompense of their crimes, he teaches men that *verily there is a God who judgeth rightly*. Thus, both his long-suffering and his vengeance throw a lustre on his wisdom. Were all punished.

men would forget an hereafter. Did all escape, they would think that God had forsaken the earth, and whatever they did, the Lord regarded not.

On the other hand, as the gospel tells us that external felicity is not always a mark of the divine favor, so it bids us not to be surprised if we see good men laboring under the pressure of calamity. It silences the voice of murmuring, by giving us to understand, that considering the infinite evil of sin, however God may frown upon even the righteous, he treats them far more gently and tenderly than they deserve. *Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins?* (Lam. iii. 39.) As if the prophet had said, "What! out of hell, and yet complain? Blush, O man, for thy ingratitude! Tremble for thy presumption!" But the gospel farther informs us that we greatly mistake in concluding a man miserable because he is poor, or despised, or oppressed—that the peace and pleasure of a Christian are a peace and pleasure, which, as the world cannot give, so it cannot take away—that even in calamity the "consolations of God" impart more gladness and better enjoyment than can be felt or known by the wicked *when their corn and their wine abound*. It informs us that *all things*, even the most unpromising, *shall work together for the good of them who love God, and are called according to his purpose*—that afflictions are the discipline of their Father's house, and

that the exercise of this discipline towards them is at once a proof and privilege of their adoption, for *whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth*—that he makes affliction an instrument by which he “purges away the dross, takes away the tin, and purifies the gold of his people—by which he mortifies their corruptions and quickens their graces—by which he weans them from a criminal attachment to this world, and teaches them that as they profess to be citizens of heaven, they should justify their title to the exalted character by *setting their affections on things above*—and finally, the gospel informs us, that their sufferings shall not only be blessed to them here, but shall be abundantly repaid hereafter, when Jehovah shall finish the present dispensation of things by giving to the wicked the exact and impartial due of their iniquities, and bringing the righteous to *Zion with songs, when everlasting joy shall be upon their heads, when sorrow and sighing shall flee away*, and God himself shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. I therefore remark,

3. That the gospel of Christ affords us the truest information about a *future state*.

The gospel informs us that we shall live hereafter—that as soon as the soul is separated from the body by death, it repairs to the tribunal of God, where it receives a sentence which fixes its eternal destiny—that this sentence, however, is but the

first part of the divine proceeding—that God has appointed a day in which he will openly judge the world by Jesus Christ—that at this awfully interesting period the trump of God shall burst the caverns of the dead, and startle into life the slumbering dust—that the bodies of men thus raised shall be reunited to their souls—that after this new union they shall be summoned, amidst the dread solemnities of a descending God and the convulsions of a dissolving universe, before the judgment seat of Christ—that there they *must give an account of all the deeds done in the body, whether they be good or whether they be evil*—that infinite equity will pass upon every individual an irreversible decision—that then the scene will be forever closed, when the *wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.*

When men consider themselves immortal beings, and believe that their present state has a most serious influence upon the happiness or misery of an eternal existence, it becomes a subject of important investigation to know what their state *is*, and how they may be sure of future bliss.

To obtain true satisfaction, let them not run to philosophic schools—let them not trudge through the pathless desert of wild conjecture—let them not be duped by the high pretensions of learned ignorance. Miserable comforters are they all!

The Bible alone can help them in their straits; and, therefore, we may observe,

4. That the gospel of Christ opens to our view the *nature of our present condition*.

Vain was every exertion to account for the introduction and prevalence of sin, and to discover the extent of its direful consequences. The gospel reveals to us the dreadful secret. It informs us that man was at first created pure, spotless, and transcendently happy—perfectly innocent—shining in the rays of his Creator's glory—surrounded with delights, and dignified with the homage of an obedient world, there was nothing which could give him one painful emotion. All within was serene and joyous—all without secure and peaceful. That in this situation his God entered into a covenant with him by giving him as the test of his gratitude and his duty, a law which was admirably fitted to promote his happiness. That the condition of this covenant was perfect obedience to the divine law. That eternal life and glory were promised as the high reward of fidelity; and death, in the largest meaning of the word, death temporal, spiritual, and eternal, was threatened as the tremendous penalty in case of unfaithfulness. That this covenant was made with our first parents, not as individuals, but as a *nature*, as the public representatives of their future family, who should therefore stand or fall with them, live in their life, and

die in their death. That God marked, as the pledge of their obedience, a certain tree, from which he commanded them to abstain. That, regardless of his command, abusing the liberty with which he had endued them, and yielding to the suggestions of Satan, an apostate spirit, they plucked the forbidden fruit—they transgressed the covenant of their God—they fell from their integrity. That at the instant of their fall the broken law arrested them, and they became exposed to all the horrors which its curse contains. That by their disobedience they broke down the sacred hedge which divine faithfulness had placed around them. That sin, with all her hellish train, rushed through the breach into our world, and from that fatal moment to this has spread desolation and wo amongst men. But this is not all. The gospel informs us, that we are, every one of us, *by nature children of wrath*, deriving from our first parents both guilt and depravity; and that this is the corrupted source from which all actual transgressions proceed. That, in consequence of our guilt and pollution, we are odious and loathsome in the sight of a holy God, and have in our hearts a principle of enmity against him. That *dead in trespasses and sins*, we can do nothing to help ourselves, as we can do nothing but sin. That no created power can help us, or loose us in the least from our connection with the violated covenant. That

while this connection subsists we can expect nothing but what the covenant has to give, and that this is nothing but *the fiery indignation which shall devour the adversaries.*

This information, if viewed in itself, is dreadful—enough to strike the chill of death into every heart—and were the message of God to stop here, instead of bringing glad tidings, it would convert our world into a very hell. But it is one of the benevolent characteristics of the religion of Jesus, that it smites only to heal; it lays open the disease, that it may apply the remedy. And hence we remark,

Lastly, That the gospel of Christ reveals a method of recovery from our ruined condition.

Had Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, been asked, “Can sinful men be saved, and the honor of his Creator be preserved?” his silence would have proclaimed his inability to answer. It is one of the first dictates of reason, that a criminal ought to atone for his crime. But what atonement, what satisfaction, can a sinner make? His offence is infinite—all that he has, all that he can do, is a debt. Will repentance help him? Alas! the law knows not of repentance. It fixes the penalty with the transgressor; and if God be faithful to himself, the penalty must be executed. And now, when all prospect of escape is cut off, who shall screen the offender from wrath? Shall no

despair blacken his countenance, and harrow up his soul? Oh no! at this season of need, the gospel of Christ leaps down from heaven, and brings speedy and effectual relief. It is the sum of her reviving message, *Deliver him from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom.* In the explication of this transporting news, the gospel informs us that God, out of mere mercy, resolved to save a number of sinful men, and to save them in a way which should bring all the glory to his sovereign grace; that as he could not dispense with the sanction of his law, and as man was utterly unable to give the satisfaction which the law required, the Second Person of the glorious trinity voluntarily offered to assume our nature, to become the substitute of all whom the Father should give him, and who should believe upon his name, and in that character to obey perfectly the divine law, and endure the whole of the terrible punishment which their sins deserved; and thus pave the way for restoring them to divine favor and making them certain heirs of eternal life. That in the fulness of time, fixed by infinite wisdom, the Lord Jesus actually came into our world—that being born in an extraordinary manner, he was not one of Adam's represented children—was neither guilty, nor polluted—was not exposed to the curse, nor bound by the obligations of the law, and that he consented to be made under it as the representa-

tive of his people, both in its obligations and in its curse. That having graciously submitted to be made thus under the law, he *did* perfectly obey it, through a life of labor, temptation, and suffering. That at his death he *did* make himself an offering. That stretched upon the accursed tree, and deprived of the light of his Father's countenance, he drank the dregs of his Father's wrath; received into his soul the bitter anguish which would have been our portion through eternity; and struggled, at the same time, with all the malice and all the madness of hell. But being Jehovah in our nature, his sufferings, though short, were of infinite value, and completed the purchase of our redemption. His own arm defeated the hosts of darkness—his expiring breath proclaimed his victory—and the cross of Calvary stood the bloody trophy of his conquest.

The gospel informs us that, though our Redeemer died, he rose again, and ascended up, visibly, into the highest heaven—that he appears there at this moment, as the intercessor of his people, presenting in their room his everlasting merits—that there he manages all their concerns—that thence he sends down his Spirit to work effectually in their hearts, and to prepare them for being with him in glory.

The gospel further informs us, that the salvation which Jesus Christ has procured is freely offered

to the chief of sinners; that whosoever will, may come and receive it, and be forever happy; and that if any to whom it is preached, shall perish at last, they will have nothing to blame but their own wilful, obstinate unbelief.

[*The application is wanting.*]

ON STEADFASTNESS
IN
RELIGIOUS SENTIMENT.

SERMON XII.

ON STEADFASTNESS IN RELIGIOUS SENTIMENT.

EPHESIANS IV. 14

That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.

THE unity of Christians in the faith, the growth and strength of their character, have much importance attached to them by the Lord Jesus, and appear, if we may use the expression, to lie very near his heart. After his ascension to the throne of his glory, one of the first acts of his intercession, and of the power of his exalted state, was to make provision for the continuance and increase of these

graces. *When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men: and he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry; for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man; unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.* What the particular connection is between his people's advancement in knowledge and spiritual attainments, and the degree of happiness in their unseen witnesses, or what especial influence it may exert upon the general economy of his kingdom, in the invisible world, we do not know, nor is it useful if it were proper to inquire. But we do know, from the passage just read, that whatever is great or magnificent in the office of an apostle, or prophet, or evangelist; whatever is useful or honorable in a pastor or teacher, it was and is conferred upon them, not for their own sakes, but for the sake of *his body, the church*. We are furnished with ordinances, and means in every variety, that there may be no hindrance to our profiting in the school of Jesus Christ—that we may habitually enlarge our knowledge of those things *which the angels desire to look into*; and as fellow-students with them of *the mystery of God*, may grow in the intelligence which they value

and in fitness for their fellowship, when, after a few days spent here, in *absence from the Lord*, we shall join their society in his presence and service.

Surely, if such is our destination—if these the prospects which cheer us in this vale of tears—if our hearts are set upon their invigorating refreshment and peerless dignity—nothing can worse become us than indifference about our progress in the Christian lesson; nothing should fill us with deeper shame than the poor account which most of us have to give of the pains wasted upon our spiritual education, and of our slowness of heart to understand our Lord's instructions. On nothing should our eagerness be prompted, our ambition fired, and our efforts expended, more than on this, *that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine by the sleight of men and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.*

It may be of advantage to us to consider somewhat more minutely this description of religious children—the contrast which ought to mark our characters—and the means and motives to our solid improvement.

I. Our notice is drawn to the characters of these religious children. The apostle states it to consist principally in two things: *fickleness* in matters of faith, and *facility* of deception by designing men.

1. *Fickleness* in matters of faith—being *tossed to*

and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine.

There always has been and always will be a desperate and deadly conflict between truth and error, nor can there be any compromise between them. The bastard charity of the day is very clamorous to make us give up all that we account precious, or at least to compound with and not to molest their contraries. But the demand is absurd and the concession impossible. It is the *nature of truth* to be the most intolerant thing conceivable. That truth is and can be but *one*. And the *Liar* plays off his most ancient, most extensive, and most successful game, when he can sow in the church the seeds of all sorts of discordant principles touching the faith and hope of sinful men. In this, it is true, God does as he does in other cases, bring good out of evil. *There must be heresies among you, i. e. divisions on account of the truth, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.* Thus it fared with the churches in the days and under the eyes of the apostles themselves. The apostle Paul was constantly in armor combating for the faith that had been delivered once for all to the saints. Every gross corruption of the gospel, every foolish and fantastic whim invented and broached by men of reprobate minds, or of distorted imagination, infested the churches in as great a variety as at any later period. Per-

haps modern times cannot reckon a single deviation from the gospel, which in form or in substance was not a curse of the apostolic age. No sooner were the pestiferous notions started, than crowds started and ran after them. If any thing, in the mean while, struck the fancy of one who was or who wished to be a leader, a part of the crowd would turn aside after *him*. Some of them, after fatiguing themselves in the pursuit of every vanity, would perchance return to a sober mind, and re-adhere to the cause which they had deserted. Others again, though cured of one extravagance, were just as ready to fall into another as the occasion recurred; and many, proceeding from one step to another in their evil course, at last made shipwreck of the faith altogether, and became downright apostates; abandoning the grounds of their confidence before God and the communion of his people, and *perishing at last in their own corruption.* *These were they who separated themselves; sensual, not having the Spirit.* *They went out from us, says John, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.*

It is no otherwise yet. Old errors of every sort, which have been exploded long ago, revive, are new-dressed, and recommended to the acceptance of the religious world. I say *old errors*, for the

devil's wit is not inexhaustible ; and therefore his delusions, plausible though they be, are only stale artifices newly tricked up to catch the ignorant and the conceited. All that the "rational Christianity" of the day glories in as its own discoveries, has many centuries ago been cast out of the Christian church as *heresies of perdition*. But come when they will, and how they will, they are sure of a ready reception, and many abettors among those who are *tossed to and fro, and are carried about with every wind of doctrine*. They, indeed, call themselves "philosophers," and "liberal inquirers ;" but the apostle calls them by their true name, "babies," and will allow them no place among inquirers but the place of those *who are ever learning and never coming to the knowledge of the truth*. Learn what they will, the truth is what they do not learn and never can perceive. They have no fixed first principles ; nothing to keep them firm and steady in the hour of temptation, or to prevent them being led away by the error of the wicked. In the calm sunshine, while there is no disturbance of the church's tranquillity, they mingle with the multitude and pass for Christians. But when the storm gathers, the ^awaters swell, the winds blow, they are shaken from their own steadfastness. They never were secured to the rock of safety, but lay loose and idle upon the surface. Now the trial hath reached them, and without strong moor-

ings, without grapplings, without anchors, without any fastenings, they are swept out of the Christian roads, and are the sport of the waves and the winds on the trackless ocean. Soon are they scattered away from the rock; and while they run, swift as the evil blast can drive them, towards certain destruction, they are elated, ignorant as they are, with the rapidity of their course, until they are suddenly dashed among the breakers, or ingulfed in the billows, or absorbed in the quicksands. Thus terminates their adventurous speculation, and the last news of the poor souls is, "they perished!"

I have been referring to those errors, in the success of which the Destroyer goes directly to his proper work, the irretrievable ruin of men. But a capital error seldom comes alone; so there are many smaller deviations from the soundness of the faith which attend the steps and prepare the way for that which strikes at the foundation of entire Christianity. It is melancholy and almost incredible to see what a mere puff of wind is sufficient to drive many a gallant looking vessel out of her course; and the odds are infinitely against her, but before she recovers it, she falls among enemies who decoy her to her ruin. Without figure, you often find those who, upon the whole, are friendly to the truth; yet by the merest trifle in the world—something which appears to them ingenious when it is only absurd—something which is recom-

mended by a respectable name—something of which the whole attraction is its supposed novelty—turns them aside from “the old paths where is the good way.”

The swarms of little sects which spring up and die almost as soon as they are known, yet for the time being vex the friends and furnish matter of exultation to the foes of evangelical doctrine, owe their origin for the most part to a paltry individual vanity. The peace of the church is broken; her strength is divided; the vigor of her sons is impaired by foolish contentions. The wily adversary does not let the occasion slip. Many who set out with an apparent trifle, do not end till they have made inroads upon the substantial truth; and Christians are called to struggle with an enemy who has already penetrated their camp. On such fickle beings you never can count; they want that sobriety of mind, that Christian common sense, which is proof against such small attacks, and is infinitely better for preserving the order and the truth of God pure and entire, than the finest genius and the profoundest learning can be without it.

2. Liableness to imposition by the arts of the insidious is another character of these religious children.

Error, when seen in its true colors, is rather apt to deter than to allure. Nor is there, perhaps, a single one which, if exhibited without disguise,

would ever succeed in making proselytes. Even children would be too sagacious for such dupery. Accordingly, its approaches are conducted with caution and address. It is very careful not to alarm suspicion or excite prejudice. Concealment is its very life. Its abettors will pretend that your faith and theirs, however they may differ upon speculative points, come nearer to each other on all questions of practice than you are ready to admit. They will enumerate a number of things which no man in his senses ever thinks of disputing; and when there is no gainsaying them in these matters they will leave you, if they are master-workmen, to draw the inference that, after all, they cannot be so far wrong as some would persuade you; well knowing that the great obstacle to your conversion is surmounted when you are brought, by this piece of craft, to form a favorable opinion of their tenets. But you have already entered into temptation; you have already set your foot in the path which goes down to death, and if God in his great mercy do not enable you to make a speedy retreat, your ruin is inevitable. Take it then at the very beginning, as a simple rule, and of easy and sure application, The man who equivocates in religious matters, who declines giving you a prompt explanation of his views, and rather evades your inquiries than meets them, that man is a deceiver and an Anti-christ. Truth was not intended to be smuggled.

A city set on a hill cannot be hid, nor is a lighted candle to be put under a bushel. *Preach the word*, is the commandment of our Lord Jesus Christ; and the teacher who does not do it frankly, so that men may not only understand his meaning, but cannot possibly misunderstand it, when treating of our eternal peace, is an enemy to our happiness and to our Lord. Avoid him as you would a pestilence. My contempt and horror embrace all those, who, after years of public ministrations, leave their people in doubt what their sentiments are. Truth is not with them the infinitely important interest. Their prospect is that of a fearful reckoning with that Saviour, *who came into the world that he might bear witness to the truth*; and even here it is the duty of his church to spew them out of her mouth.

3. Another artifice of those who lie in wait to deceive, is the wrapping up of their deceptions in scriptural phrases, and even in the language which is consecrated by the usage of the Christian church. Every thing sounds fair and looks well; has a pious air, and apparently a sound sense; and they may notwithstanding be inculcating the most damnable errors, and converting the very word of God into a vehicle for the poison. Undoubtedly the inspired word expresses revealed truth in the most precise and proper manner. And the objection to these men is, not that they quote the scriptures, but

that they quote them fraudulently. The cheat lies here—the passages quoted have, from time immemorial, borne in the church of God a definite sense. You of course understand them in that received sense. But you are not aware that these apostles of error, take them in quite a different sense, they and you use the same terms, but you do not intend the same thing; and when they think you are not drilled quite enough, they will never have the candor to undeceive you. They will let out in other places and at other times, as far as they judge it prudent, what their meaning is; and in the meanwhile you are become so accustomed to hear this perversion of holy writ, that your minds are debauched from the simplicity of Christ, and you imperceptibly slide into the pit they have digged for you. Sometimes, indeed, this trick overshoots the mark. It is related of John Taylor, the famous Arian of Norwich, that he gave mortal offence to an Arian congregation in London by the use of scripture language. His hearers, like people of that class everywhere, were not much acquainted with their bibles, and mistook him for an old-fashioned puritan! Thus the common sense of mankind, even of Arians themselves, when they are not put on their guard, decided that whatever the Bible teaches, it does not teach Arianism.

4. A fourth stratagem of deceivers is an affectation of unbounded liberality and charity.

Nothing is so odious in their eyes as bigotry. Why must you claim the exclusive privilege of being in the right? Why is not another man's opinion as good as your own? Why not allow your neighbors the privilege of which you are so tenacious, the privilege of thinking for themselves! Why must your charity be confined to sects or principles? Cannot a man be distinguished for Christian virtues, and exemplary in the discharge of his Christian duties, a sincere lover of the truth, and ardent in the pursuit of it, unless all his ideas of propriety be squared by your own rule? How terrible that the religion of peace should set friends quarreling! How unworthy of the good will which the gospel was intended to cherish, and of the generous philanthropy of its Divine Author! All this is very fine, no doubt; for plausible talk: but in the mouths of the crafty nothing but talk; yet its effect is to overthrow the faith of some, who from want of discrimination, from a softness of mind, from not suspecting any mischief with so benevolent a face, from not having nerves to withstand a little raillery, from the joint power of ridicule and flattery, run headlong into the arms of a fiend, and from a dread of bigotry adopt ruinous heresy. On all which I crave leave to submit a remark or two.

(1.) They who are so very anxious about the liberty of thinking for themselves, mean in reality

the liberty of thinking *for* you and thinking *through* you. Who hinders them from thinking and speaking too? Who meddles with their thoughts or their speech, until they invade the sanctuary of our own faith? Then if they be resisted—if every thing is not yielded to them as a matter of course, if we exercise the right of thinking and speaking—they are vastly indignant. Then come forth the lamentations about the lack of charity, and all the whinings about “bigotry” and “persecution,” of which the true grievance is that they cannot provoke something which might appear worthy of the name. But do you shut your mouths and allow them to have all the representation in their own way—let them without contradiction or opposition spread their doctrines and instil their poison throughout the community—and you will doubtless be lauded for your liberality and charity!

(2.) My second remark is, that after all, the truths of the gospel are not matters of human opinion, nor have you any right to treat them so. They are facts about which our appeal must lie to the veracity of God speaking in his word. He has committed them to us as a sacred deposit, which we are ordered to keep pure and entire, contending earnestly for them, and are not at liberty to make a compromise of them with any opinions whatsoever.

(3.) Once more This profession about “libe-

ality" and "charity," is a mere artifice of imposture. No men have less of it than they whose boast of it is the loudest. How do they exult and triumph in the misconduct of any who hold sounder principles than themselves? Now, if the apostle understood the nature of charity when he said that she rejoiceth not in iniquity, they who do so rejoice proclaim that they are utterly destitute of its influence.

You shall find these advocates for charity, when they are in mixed companies, all gentleness, all forbearance, with nothing but the milk of human kindness; but when they are by themselves, to use the expression of one who had been once of their party, "bitter enough." In short, of all the sects which are abroad in the world, not excepting even the followers of the man of sin, there are none which occasionally evince more virulence and violence of feeling, nor a more persecuting temper, than these same smooth-tongued praisers of charity. Of all the bigots on this earth, let me be farthest from the bigot to modern liberality.

Let us now turn our eyes for a moment,

II. To the contrast which we ought to exhibit to these religious children. *That ye be no more children.* We should then display,

1. *Intelligence.* I know not how it has come to pass; but such is the fact, that hearers of the gospel are prone to take their profession upon trust.

They think, or act as if they thought, that any particular acquaintance with its principles and proofs, belongs exclusively to the ministry. They commit the interests of their property to the lawyer; of their bodies to the physician; and as for their immortal souls, the clergyman may look after them, if he pleases. In this spirit of listlessness do they hear the gospel, and forget it almost as soon as heard. But for diligent inquiry—for ascertaining with their own eyes and understandings what are revealed truths, on points too of infinite moment—for searching the scriptures daily, whether these things which they are taught from the pulpit are really so, why it's what no *genteel* professor ever thinks about. The consequence is, and must be, that they are mere children in the most important of all knowledge—even men of high respectability for talents and research in other things, betray the most surprising ignorance of the Bible. No wonder that they are carried about by every wind of doctrine, and fall helpless victims into the snares of those who lie in wait to deceive. At the same time, if they happen to get any crude and undigested notions of Christian truth, they are as obstinate and positive in maintaining their own hasty views, as if they had studied the scriptures all their lives long. My friends, this will not do. Have you not immortal souls? Do you know when they will be required of you? Are you fully aware

of their natural condition ; and what is requisite to their eternal happiness ? On all these questions the Bible treats plainly and decisively. It fairly warns you that a mistake is very possible, very common, and infinitely dangerous. Is it a waste of time, think you, to know what it really does determine ? Is the message of the great and terrible God, to men, to *you*, to you *personally*, to be thrown aside with less ceremony than a daily newspaper, and without an effort so much as to understand what he says ? And all your awful concern in it to be tossed away with a carelessness which makes the angels tremble ? Do you consider, while you indulge this supineness, while you neglect to become proficient in the knowledge of that wisdom which cometh from above, you are habitual breakers of God's commandments, in as high and in a higher degree, than if you were common drunkards, thieves, adulterers, and prostitutes ? Rouse from your slumbers, or you may see stranger things than publicans and harlots going into the kingdom of God before your faces, and leaving you with all your decencies, your morals, your accomplishments, your respectability, to beg for admission and be refused. Strive to enter in at the straight gate. Aim at being not only Christians, but intelligent Christians. Study that great charter of your salvation, the Bible, until, by God's rich blessing, you shall *always be ready to give a reason of the hope that is*

within you, and no longer be ranked as children, nor be considered as an easy prey to them who lie in wait to deceive.

2. The second attribute of Christian character as opposed to the infirmities of children, is *firmness*.

In religious, as in other life, the plausible, are the least solid, and the least to be trusted. They who have arrived at what the scriptures call *perfection*, who have grown up into Christian manhood, are not to be moved away from the hope of the gospel by smooth stories and bland professions; nor to be cajoled out of their faith concerning our Lord Jesus Christ, by pretenders to new illumination, or more expansive charity. *Beloved*, says John, *believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they be of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world*. And they are to try them by their doctrines, especially, adds the apostle, try their doctrines concerning the person of our Lord Jesus Christ. *Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is of God; and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is not of God*. Do you think the insipid, the frigid notion, that Jesus Christ was *born*, like any other man, gives you the meaning, or touches the emphasis, of his *coming in the flesh*? A Christian, that is a settled, established Christian, is not thus to be fooled and wheedled out of the

true doctrine of his Redeemer, and of eternal life along with it. Ten sheep-skins, ever so artfully put on, cannot conceal the insidious wolf. His voice betrays him, and the real sheep flee from him. It is no new thing for Satan to be transformed into an angel of light; nor his ministers as ministers of righteousness. A well-trained Christian will use the freedom to look under this angel mask—to inquire how far the resemblance to ministers of righteousness goes—and by faithfully and fearlessly applying the apostle's rule, will speedily detect both the devil and his ministers. He has told us how these gentry, the ministers of Satan, must be treated. *If there come any unto you, viz. with the pretensions of a teacher, and bring not this doctrine, the doctrine of Christ as come in the flesh, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed, for he that biddeth him God speed, is partaker of his evil deeds.* He carries his master's mark in his forehead. Christians, who are enlisted under the Captain of salvation, are to allow no place to such an Antichrist—far less do any thing to encourage him. There must be no half measures—no parleying—no pausing. Shut your doors upon him saith the inspired direction, and let him go where the devil and his doctrines are in better repute. If not, if you are frightened by the terror of an ill name, if you are unable to stand the small shot of Antichrist, and begin to tremble and tamper when the

breath of the evil one approaches you—look well to yourself; you are in a fair way of changing your professed service, of being disowned by Jesus Christ, and linking yourself forever with the devil and his angels. Let it be known, Christians, openly known, so that there can be no mistake, that you have neither hearts, nor hands, nor ears, for any, who, upon whatever pretext, would unsettle your faith on the Son of God. So that men may save you the pain, and themselves the judgment, of trying to break up your trust for eternity, and of persuading you to lay another foundation *than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.*

III. The means of our preservation and solid improvement are very obvious and simple.

1. Be students of the holy scriptures; search them; dig in them as for hidden treasures, and you shall find that which will make you wise to salvation, while the scorner seeketh wisdom and findeth it not. But remember that he who gave them for a light to your feet and a lamp to your paths, must open your eyes before you shall see wonderful things in his law. Sweet, and blessed, and freely given are his gracious teachings. *Did not our hearts burn within us,* said one disciple to the other, *while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?*

2. Repress vain curiosity. Inquire not into the reason of those things which are to be received on

the credit of the divine testimony. Be satisfied that the Lord hath said it, and ask no farther. They, *who boldly intrude into those things which they have not seen*, may pretend what they please; but you have the highest authority in earth or heaven for being assured that *they are only vainly puffed up by their fleshly mind*, and with all their knowledge or speculations, can do you nothing but harm.

3. Open not your ears to the suggestion of new light and new discoveries in religion. "The true Christ is no new Christ." He is the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever. There is no room for discoveries in God's revelation for the salvation of men. The revelation is itself the discovery. You are not to look for a new way to heaven. Jesus Christ is the way, and the truth, and the life; no man cometh to the Father but by him. This has been the divine method from the very beginning. That which a thousand years ago brought his sons and daughters to glory, viz. the making the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings, must bring you thither, or your arrival there is hopeless. And as to the new light, which is the boast of those who turn aside from the holy commandment delivered unto them, rely upon it, it is nothing but a new edition of old darkness, only resembling more than it did the dunnest smoke of hell.

4 Keep especially clear of uncommon pretenders to charity. Satan will mask his designs so long as he can, and so will all his ministers. Believe that God is love, that he is the great and essential Charity. Be satisfied then with as much charity as he has shown, and do not think of improving upon your Maker, by entertaining and expressing a more charitable opinion of sinners than himself. He hath said, and will make it good, and see that your charity do not trench upon his truth, he hath said, gainsay it who will, *He that believeth not shall be damned.*

IV. Lastly, we have abundant motives for our Christian cultivation.

The angels are our fellow-students, and in some particulars of their education Christians have the preference. Their first knowledge of God's gracious design of forming Jews and Gentiles into one family with themselves, under Christ the head, they got from the church, and probably from the revelations made to Paul. *To the intent*, says that great proficient in sacred things, *that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be made known BY THE CHURCH the manifold wisdom of God.* If the thought of being scholars in the same school, and learners of the same things, with those blessed beings, does not raise in your minds the glory of your studies, and cause you to strain every nerve in patient and persevering ap-

plication, that you may be fit to hold converse with them when you shall throw off this body, it is not for the speech of earth to tell the baseness of your spirits; eternity must find the proper expressions.

Moreover, every advance in true scriptural knowledge advances you at the same time in righteousness and true holiness, deepens and brightens the features of the divine image, and is a step in your heavenly promotion; for *they that be wise shall shine as the sun* in the kingdom of their Father.

Farther, every victory over error renders every succeeding one more easy. *Resist the devil and he will flee from you.* And when the chief has taken himself to flight, his subalterns will not be long in quitting the field. It is the *first* attack in which they are most furious, and lay the basis of their future success. Foiled here, they become less troublesome. Satan and his servants have something else to do with their time and talents than to waste them upon fruitless attempts.

Once more. Not only will your duty become easier in proportion as you faithfully perform it, but every advantage gained over the foe, draws you into closer communion with our Lord Jesus Christ. It is in his strength that you withstand and conquer. His glory gains by every achievement performed in his name. You press hard upon his steps as a victorious Saviour, and are safe, as you are near him. He notes and he rewards your

efforts. *To him that overcometh, is his magnificent promise, will I grant to sit down with me on my throne, even as I also overcame and am set down with my Father on his throne.*

Wherefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord. Amen!

DR. MASON'S
S P E E C H
RELATIVE TO THE RESIGNATION
OF HIS
P A S T O R A L C H A R G E
IN THE
CITY OF NEW-YORK.

P R E F A C E .

IN obtruding his personal concerns upon the public, an individual subjects himself, and for the most part justly, to the charge of egotism. But when the public condescend to honor him and his affairs with their notice, the respect which he owes to their opinion imposes on him the duty of preventing or correcting mistakes which may be greatly injurious to himself. Had the author of the following pages received only a tolerable share of candor from many who had easy access to the truth; had not his feelings been wantonly sported with, and his character cruelly assailed; had not representations tending to degrade him in the esteem of the community, been industriously circulated; he had never offered to the public eye a single line on so small a subject as the resignation

of his pastoral charge. The necessity created by disingenuous treatment is his only apology for committing his explanations to the press ; and he trusts that by all good and honorable men it will be thought sufficient.

J. M. MASON.

Philadelphia, 9th June, 1810.

NOTE.

EXCEPTING some slight verbal corections ; the addition, in a few instances, of a sentence or part of a sentence, not varying the argument, nor altering the meaning ; and the insertion of a paragraph which happened to be omitted in the delivery, the ensuing speech is printed exactly as it was spoken.

DR. MASON'S SPEECH,

ETC.

*Associate Reformed Presbytery of New-York,
Thursday Evening, May 24th, 1810.*

PRESENT,

Rev. JAMES MATHEWS, *Moderator.*

Ministers.

JAMES SCRIMGEOUR,
JOHN M. MASON, D.D.,
JOHN M'JIMSEY,
GEORGE STEWART.

Ruling Elders.

GEORGE LINDSAY,
DERICK AMERMAN,
PETER R. SPRAINGER.

Dr. MASON called up the papers which he presented to the Presbytery on the 17th instant, at Newburgh; which were read, as follows, viz:

No. 1.

"To the Moderator and Members of the Associate Reformed Presbytery of New-York, to meet at Newburgh, on Wednesday the 16th day of May instant.

"REVEREND BRETHREN:—Serious reflection, often repeated, and, for a considerable time past

habitual; accompanied also, if I do not entirely mistake, with scrupulous caution and fervent prayer against an improper bias, has convinced me that my longer continuance in my present congregational charge, will be favorable neither to my own peace, nor to my people's benefit, nor to the general interests of our church.

“Not that I have ought to accuse my people of. Their fidelity to their engagements; their kindness to myself; their respectful attention to my ministry; their public spirit; their orderly deportment, ever since my settlement among them, have endeared them to my heart, and shall forever sweeten the memory of my relation to them.

“But I find, by experience, that parochial cares, to which my own judgment not less than my ordination vows, attaches high importance, are incompatible with the work which the Head of the Church has been pleased to assign to me; and, accordingly, I do not so much as pretend to perform the duties resulting from them.

“I see the congregation suffering for want of an efficient pastoral inspection; and I anticipate, with alarm, the consequences of this evil, unless preventive measures be adopted speedily.

“I have used, without success, the only means in my power to avoid the step which I am now forced to take.

“My congregation are fully apprised of my in-

tention, and my reasons; as will appear from the document herewith presented. The decisive expressions there used are to be interpreted simply of my resolution to pursue my present application; and not as interfering, in any degree, with the submission which I owe to the authority of the Lord's house.

"I am forbidden by every Christian principle, and by every honorable sentiment, to retain a station of which I cannot fulfil the duties. I am equally forbidden to sacrifice the greater trust to the less; and as faithfulness to both cannot co-exist, I have only the afflicting alternative of praying the Reverend Presbytery to release me from my pastoral connection."

"J. M. MASON.

"New-York, 8th May, 1810."

No. 2.

"To the Members of the First Associate Reformed Church in the City of New-York.

"CHRISTIAN BRETHREN:—I have requested your attendance this evening, in order to lay before you the result of my reflections upon a subject which has long been a source of painful uneasiness to my mind.

"It is now nearly seventeen years since it pleased God to call me to the ministry of reconciliation,

and to assign me to this congregation as the immediate scene of my labors. The flower of my days has been spent with you. The course of my services has been marked with much imperfection and many failures; but marked also, as I humbly hope, by some degree of acceptance with God, and usefulness to man. Being the sole pastor of the congregation, I was bound to perform all the duties of that responsible office in so far as I was really able. For several years after my settlement among you, the state of my health, as you well remember, forbid, almost altogether, my discharge of those important functions, which are comprehended under the general term of *Parochial duty*. When this impediment was removed, others were created by trusts and employments so extensive in their nature, and so imperious in their obligation, as to demand my first care, and to consume the leisure which I should otherwise have enjoyed. Thus year after year has glided by, duties of high moment to your welfare have been unfulfilled, and the prospect of their being fulfilled by me, is more distant than ever.

“ Perceiving, as I do, their absolute necessity to your prosperity; knowing that the omission of them gradually weakens the bond of affection which should closely unite a pastor and his people; estranges the mind of individual members from the sense of their common interest in each other;

enfeebles the power of social action ; and relaxes the nerves of efficient discipline. Persuaded that Christian instruction, exhortation, reproof, and consolation, are circumscribed in their influence, and lose much of their effect, when they are not brought home by a discreet exercise of pastoral inspection ; and accounting the respect paid to merely public talent but a meagre substitute for that ardent attachment which dies away under the suspicion of neglect ; feeling, I say, the weight of these considerations, it is impossible for my heart to be tranquil. My inquietude does not arise from self-reproach. As the highest of all authority, even the indisputable authority of Him whose I am and whom I serve, has released me from parochial duties, by calling me to others which are incompatible with them, my conscience is pure. My anxiety is caused by the damage which your interests must sustain in consequence of parochial duties not being performed at all. Your patience under the privation, and your kindness to me personally, increase, instead of diminishing my difficulty. These things I frankly communicated to you at a congregational meeting in the fall of the year 1807. Although I had frequently spoken of them in private, I did not think it could answer any good purpose to bring them before you collectively, so long as I could not see how the inconvenience was to be remedied. But when a remedy

appeared to me as within reach, I embraced an early opportunity of proposing it, which I did at the meeting alluded to, by recommending the choice of an assistant to whom the parochial duties should be exclusively committed. I was disappointed. Beside the embarrassment of our national affairs, which, for a time, paralysed almost every effort, a more serious check was given to the measure by the state of our finances, which, it was supposed, could not be made sufficient to cover the additional expenditure without either distressing or banishing the poorer part of the congregation. My next concern, therefore, was to devise some means of so augmenting our resources as to remove this obstacle. After very maturely considering the matter, and balancing the advantages and disadvantages both to this congregation and to the church at large, I suggested the propriety of building a new and more spacious place of worship. As I had no doubt of the practicability of this scheme, and of a sufficiency of numbers speedily to fill the house, my calculation was, that a revenue might be secured, equal to all expenses; and also that sources would be opened of further support for our Theological Seminary with which, in a great measure, our whole body and a vast amount of Christian interests allied to it, seem likely to stand or fall. But I was again disappointed. The same objection recurred. A new church, it was

imagined, could not be erected without oppression to a considerable portion of the congregation. I found also a settled opposition to the plan of my having an assistant on any terms. What the extent of it is, I have not so much as endeavored to ascertain, because I perceived it to be enough to involve the prosecution of my wishes in much difficulty. Upon the whole, I am convinced that my proposal cannot be carried through with that cordiality which is indispensable to your comfort and to my own. The question is decided. My last hope of extricating both you and myself from our perplexed condition, and yet preserving our relation to each other, has vanished away. The higher duties which I owe to the Church of God leave no place for the details of a pastoral charge. I am at best but a nominal pastor, and there is no probability of my becoming a real one. I stand in the way of one who might be such. I cannot consent to remain in a situation so afflicting to myself, and so injurious to you. The only alternative is that which I have adopted and am about to mention. An alternative not hastily resolved upon; distinctly anticipated long ago as a possible event; put off by my utmost exertions to avoid it, until I am shut up to it; pondered, with much tenderness and solemnity, at various intervals and under various states of mind; spread out, not once nor twice, "with strong crying and tears," before

the mercy-seat; and not resorted to after all, but from a deliberate and thorough conviction of duty as in the sight of God, and as one that must give account. Brethren, we must part. My agitation and my anguish in announcing this to you are extreme. But the die is cast. The thing is inevitable. I have therefore to inform you, that it is my intention to resign my pastoral charge into the hands of the Presbytery of New York, at their next stated meeting, to be held in the town of Newburgh, on Wednesday the 16th day of May next ensuing. I give you this early notice that you may appoint, if you shall judge it proper, commissioners to attend the Presbytery, and make any representations which you may desire, so as to save the Presbytery the trouble of a special meeting. At the same time candor obliges me to state, that I have communicated my purpose, not as a matter on which my own mind is dubious or wavering; nor as a manœuvre to accomplish, by indirect means, views which I directly attempted without success. My resolution is fixed, and cannot be altered by any steps which may now be taken.

“I shall detain you no longer than to subjoin an observation or two for preventing mistakes. During the whole period of our connection the utmost harmony has subsisted between us. The reiterated proofs of your affection I shall cherish

as a spring of grateful recollection while my memory retains her seat. Dissatisfaction with my people I have none. Neither am I influenced by pecuniary motives. Your last unsolicited, unexpected addition to my income, notwithstanding the evils under which you labor were not removed, is a proof that you are ready to preclude all just uneasiness on that score.* But my salary doubled, trebled, quadrupled, would not induce me to retract, or even to hesitate. The reasons of my present conduct would still operate with unabated force.

“Nor have I been impelled by private chagrin or resentments. I have no personal quarrel with any man among you; and if I had, I should enjoy ineffable consolation from the assurance that the uniform tenor of my life puts me above the suspicion of acting from such paltry passions.

“In declaring my intention of resigning my charge, I am not to be understood as expressing any intention of abandoning the pulpit. To preach Jesus Christ and him crucified, is my honor and my happiness: nor shall I desist from my loved employment so long as I am permitted to abide in it; but shall continue to labor in the word and doctrine as God in his providence shall appoint me to a proper scene of action. In the interim between this date and the meeting of the Presby-

* Some months before, the congregation, without my request, expectation, or knowledge, unanimously voted the addition of one hundred pounds per annum to my former salary. J. M. M.

tery in May, I shall perform, if the Lord will, my public functions as usual.

“The respect which I owe to my more intimate friends, and especially to the members of the session, demands an explanation of my silence on this interesting subject until the hour of my laying it before the congregation. It is not strictly a sessional business. Talking of it, while the facts to determine the issue were still in suspense, might have been interpreted as a threat, or at least as an indecorum toward the congregation. I also studied to shun the multitude of discussions to which it would have given rise; and thus to spare myself and my brethren much pain which would otherwise have been unavoidable. My feelings at this moment justify my precaution: they are sufficiently excruciating, without having been subjected to agony a thousand times repeated.

“You will readily excuse me for not addressing you in person on this occasion. My heart tells me that I could hardly sustain the conflict. That heart is filled, and shall be filled with affectionate remembrance of you, and with fervent supplications for your temporal and eternal felicity, while the hand which expresses its emotions is able to subscribe the name of

“Your friend and pastor,

“J. M. MASON.

“*New-York, March 12, 1810.*”

The foregoing papers having been read, Mr. ANDREW FOSTER, the commissioner of the congregation, stated, in a few words, their acquiescence in Dr. MASON'S resignation, and their desire to have as much of his services as possible, in the form of supply.

Dr. MASON then rose and spoke as follows :

Mr. MODERATOR :—If the circumstances under which I now address this Presbytery did not deeply agitate my mind, I should have forsworn the best affections of human nature. In the disruption of any ties which do not bind us to misery there is something painful ; but in the disruption of ties which form one of the most tender relations of life ; which time has made venerable, friendship sweet, and religion sacred, there is something at which the heart trembles and shrinks away. I own that I have trembled ; I own that I have shrunk, in the anticipation of this hour. Seventeen years of a comfortable, a cherished, and I trust, not altogether a barren ministry, create feelings which the touch of rudeness would profane ; and claims which none but the highest authority can set aside. I have peculiar causes of attachment to my people and to the place where they worship. Both are, in some sense, my inheritance. Here my father prayed, and God heard him : here my father

preached, and God gave him seals of his ministry and crowns of his rejoicing. The memorial of his faithfulness is perpetually before my eye; and in the spot over which I now stand, his flesh rests in hope. I have entered into his labors. The seed which he sowed I have been honored to water. I have seen many of them who were the friends of his earlier and of his later days, who have also been my own friends, gathered peacefully to the tomb. I see others of them waiting till their change come. I meet every Lord's day, I discern around me now, the faces of not a few whom I may present before the mercy seat, and say, "These are the children whom thou hast given me." Assuredly, were affection the only thing to be consulted, instead of cutting the cord which unites me to them, I should seek to entwine it more closely with every ligament, of my frame. But I am not my own; I am not theirs. I owe a nobler allegiance than can grow out of their love; and to that allegiance do I bow when I ask to be released from my pastoral charge.

Moderator,—The system of every well-regulated church is a system of fixed ministrations. For the lighter services of the pulpit; for social prayer and exhortation; generally for the more public exercises of religion, an itinerant ministry, although, with the exception of *missionaries*, far inferior in labor, in care, in self-denial, in respon-

sibility, may get along and be popular. But for sound exposition of the scriptures; for "giving to every one his portion of meat in due season;" for training up the youth; for coercive and preventing discipline; for carrying both the law and the gospel home to every man's "business and bosom;" briefly, for binding up and consolidating the invaluable interests of a Christian community, there is no adequate, and no appointed, means but a *stated* ministry. Without it there may be *preachers* in abundance, *pastors* there can be none. This broad and obvious distinction is recognized in the form of a call customary in our churches; which, taking for granted that a minister is to *preach*, lays the principal stress upon his pastoral character. True it is, that no man can be a scriptural pastor who does not "feed his flock with knowledge and with understanding;" but he may provide their weekly food, plenty and good, and yet lamentably fail in his pastoral work. For my own part, the longer I consider the nature and design of the Christian ministry, the more does the importance of those functions which are termed *parochial duty*, rise to my view. I am persuaded, that without them no congregation can permanently flourish, nor any pastor be permanently comfortable. There are a thousand avenues to conviction which no public instruction can enter. A thousand difficulties to be solved which the pulpit cannot reach. There

is an adaptation of general truth to particular circumstances, fit only for the private walk or the fire-side. There is a correspondence between doctrine preached and exemplified which forces its way silently, but most effectually, to the heart. By pastoral vigilance and prudence, abuses are to be checked, and scandals prevented, which, when permitted to ripen for judicial cognizance, are often beyond remedy. It is of unutterable moment to couple, in the early associations of children, the idea of their minister with that of a spiritual father, and of their own relation and duties to the church of God—which is impossible without frequent and affectionate intercourse. The want of this is the most fertile secondary cause of that absurd contradiction, which reigns among the churches,—treating our baptized youth as if they were mere heathen. The feeble are to be strengthened, the lame to be healed, the wanderers to be hunted up and brought back. The drooping spirit is to be cheered; the thoughtless spirit admonished, the impetuous spirit restrained. The presence of a faithful pastor refreshes the soul of labor, and sweetens the crust of poverty. His voice smoothes the bed of sickness, and mitigates the rigors of death. In short, his people expect from him numerous *attentions* which allow of no substitute. They furnish an irresistible argument for rich preparation before he begins. He will find it a hard

effort to make up deficiency afterwards, and not withhold them. Yet, withhold them, and affection, the basis of confidence and of usefulness, gradually wears away. Talent may inspire admiration; it will certainly command respect; but it cannot extort love. On the other hand, there is nothing which men resent more promptly, forgive more reluctantly, and forget more slowly, than neglect. You may deny their requests; you may expose their errors; you may reprove their faults; but neglect them you may not. The civilities of life, and the friendly exterior may indeed remain; but you shall find, on the first decisive experiment, that the power of their affection is gone. They always feel themselves neglected when the parish services of their minister are not rendered. Whether the neglect be real or only apparent—whether there be just cause or not, for the omission, are questions which may have some influence on the progress of things toward this result, but will very slightly, if at all, vary the result itself. The services are not rendered, and that is enough. This night does my own experience seal the truth of my remark.

Superadded to those general reasonings which apply to all pastors and their people, is a consideration of peculiar force in its application to myself. To me, sir, has been committed, that honorable but most arduous and responsible office, the office of

forming the minds and habits of our rising ministry. On me it is severely incumbent neither to lay, nor permit to be laid, in so far as I can hinder it, any stumbling-block before their feet. What is the fact? They hear me urge parochial duties as indispensable. They know that I perform none. They, at the same time, see my congregation apparently flourishing. What is likely to be the present conclusion? Manifestly this: either that I do not believe my own declarations, or that, supposing me to be sincere, I overrate the value of parochial duties. What is likely to be the future result? Manifestly this: supposing that any of them should neglect their own charges, they will comfort themselves by quoting me. They will remember the general fact, and will forget the circumstances which render it no precedent for their imitation. They will also be tempted to hold in light estimation the sacredness of their ordination vows, one of which expressly promises diligence in parochial work. And thus, in the very act of betraying their trust, they will endeavor to quiet their consciences by pleading the example of their instructor to justify their treason. No example of mine must afford any color for such an abuse.

With this manifold conviction bearing upon my spirit, viz.

1. That parochial duties are essential to the prosperity of a congregation :

2. That my people were suffering, in their most precious interests, for want of them.

3. That it was impossible for me to perform them :

4. That the state of feeling which arises from supposed neglect, in their omission, was every day becoming more visible :

5. That the omission of them set an example which my students, should they be so inclined, might hereafter abuse to the incalculable mischief of the churches—

With all these distressing convictions haunting my soul, I ask, Moderator, and I put the question home to every member of this court, and to every person within these walls, how was it possible for me, without the utter extinction of whatever is holy or honest in man, to remain easy or inactive. Yes, sir, I have had on this subject hours of anguish to which no one was witness but the great keeper of secrets. Large and repeated draughts of bitterness, in comparison of which all that others have suffered on my account is no more than the straggling drop. Often, often, did I interrogate myself: "Are you not pastor of this congregation?" "Yes." "Do you fulfil the engagements contracted at your ordination?" "No." "Are not the congregation suffering from the omission?" "They are." "Is the omission wilful on your part?" "That I can answer firmly in the nega-

tive." "Why, then, do you not adopt some remedy?" "Because there is none within reach."

Thus did I commune with my own heart and with my God, when some, I doubt not, imagined I was utterly unconcerned. Nor did I break silence to men, unless in a very general way, until an opportunity occurred, as I thought, of disembarassing myself and my congregation. Then I lost no time in explaining, first to the session and trustees jointly; and afterwards to the congregation, the interference of my public trust with the details of congregational labor. I frankly told them that these details I could not perform, and therefore would not so much as attempt it. That I felt myself liberated from the necessity by the authority of my Master in heaven, who had assigned me other work of larger interest and more imperative obligation. That I could not, however, with a good conscience, stand by and see their spiritual edifice decay; nor abstain from giving them open warning; and pointing out the only means of preventing the ruin consistently with my remaining their minister. That means was the procuring of an assistant, to whom the parochial duties should exclusively belong.

This was in the fall of 1807. The proposal was differently received by different persons. Some, I know, were decidedly favorable. Others were decidedly and actively unfavorable. They urged

“the general inconvenience of collegiate charges as experienced in this city. The unseemliness of allotting two ministers to the same congregation in New York; the one preaching, the other sitting idle, while so many places are destitute of the Christian ordinances altogether; and the impracticability of providing for two ministers without such an increase of burdens as should either oppress our poorer members; or expel them from our sanctuary.”

These are all the avowed reasons which came to my ear, and I suppose they are all which could be plausibly produced. The first confounded a connection of two ministers in one congregation with the union of two or more congregations in a common charge; and therefore had no force at all which would not equally show the impropriety of more than one minister in the same town or city. The second was dictated by that very common but very small calculation, which sacrifices substance to show; and is never contented unless a minister be wedded to a congregation, although his labors, in a different form, repay the church of God, in advantage to her general interests, a hundred fold. The third, *viz.*, that my expedient “would distress or banish our poor,” I never believed nor do I now believe to have any real foundation. Facts are against it. The poor themselves did not urge it. But it is not unusual for men to frame

opinions for the poor, and act as their advocates; while at the same time, these very poor are often ignorant of the whole matter, and disclaim, upon the first information, the sentiments attributed to them. Let me speak freely, for I speak with certainty. The poor, not those who subsist upon alms, but those who acquire a decent support by honorable industry, are grievously injured. My experience enables, and respect to a highly meritorious class of the community enjoins, me to testify, that the poor are not the first to decline their share, and more than their share, of public burdens. Were the opulent to contribute, in proportion to their power, the *tithe* of what is contributed by the poor, there could never be any want of means for the noblest purposes of beneficence. Yet as the poor are frequently misled into notions and conduct which, if left to themselves, they would never have adopted; and as a plea founded upon professed regard to them, is well suited to inflame their minds, I did not judge it advisable to press my point, till I was prepared to meet the principal objection with an answer more decisive than reasoning: especially as some alleged, doubtless in proof of the general disaffection toward my plan, that it was espoused, in the meeting of the congregation, by only a solitary individual. This is extremely fallacious. Modest men, unaccustomed to appear in public, can rarely overcome their diffidence so

far as to speak in a promiscuous assembly. Their feelings are mistaken, because not expressed; and inferences are drawn from their silence the very reverse of the truth. But, taking the fact as it is stated, viz. that only an individual espoused my cause; let it never be forgotten that *that* individual was ALEXANDER CAMPBELL. A man whose value I knew well, but knew too late; and who is now, without peradventure, in a better world. Allow me, sir, to say of him—it is the only opportunity I have had of paying my tribute to his memory—allow me to say, without discourtesy to any of our surviving friends, that for all which belongs to native energy, united with unbending integrity and an utter abhorrence of petty intrigue, he has not left his superior among us. Without learning himself, a man of mere learning was a plaything in his hand.—Without political training, he was a politician of larger and of sounder brain than the most of those whom *we* call statesmen. But he was modest—he was retired—he was not seen but in the effusions of unfettered confidence: he was not seen at all by the mass of those with whom he habitually conversed. I have wondered that, in the holy providence of God, such rare intellect should have been expended upon blocks of marble, when it might have been appropriately occupied in rearing the moral edifice of a nation. But he is gone to a scene where his faculties shall not

miss their employment: his dying lips breathed out the virtue of the blood of the cross. I pass by his tomb, and repeat in my sorrow, "Yes! here —(with no

Perhaps)—in this neglected spot is laid
 A heart once pregnant with celestial fire;
 Hands, that the rod of empire might have swayed,
 Or wak'd to ecstasy the living lyre."

Pardon my digression—I return.

Whatever was the state of private wishes, nothing was done. A number talked; none exerted themselves, and the decisive moment passed by. Then came the EMBARGO, which will be had in unblest remembrance, so long as a measure so absurd, immoral, and destructive, shall be entitled to a "bad eminence" in the records of the world. Our little bark was locked up in the universal frost; and nothing could be done till Mr. Erskine's thaw in the spring of 1809. The revival of our commerce, and the cheerful activity which it diffused, seemed to be a proper juncture for suggesting a second measure, which, by removing the danger of too heavy a pressure on the poor, might not only accomplish the first, but open new sources of both comfort and usefulness. This was *the erection of a larger and more commodious house of worship*. Accordingly, on the 16th of May last, I presented to the board of trustees, through

their chairman, a memorial, of which the following is a copy, viz.

“SIR,—I hope I shall not be thought officious in asking the early and decisive attention of the trustees to an object of confessed importance, and which has, for some time back, been a frequent topic of conversation among the members of our own and our neighboring churches—I mean the erection of a new and larger place of worship.

“I have often expressed an opinion that a place of worship should be of a moderate size; very little, if any, more spacious than the one which we already possess. And to that opinion, as to a *general* rule, I still adhere. But this rule, like all others, I find by experience to have exceptions. A great city produces habits and circumstances which cannot be controlled by a small section of its inhabitants, and which prudence directs them to turn to their advantage. It is a principle in human nature, that everything, to be respectable, must be on a scale proportioned to the scene of action. Large cities, therefore, will have large dwelling-houses; large buildings for civil purposes; large establishments for charity; and, on the same ground, large churches. Viewing the subject in this light, I am compelled to yield to the reasons which require us to prepare, without delay, for

providing a larger and more commodious house of worship.

“ We owe it to our own relative standing in the community, which will be materially affected for the better by such an alteration.

“ We owe it to the claims upon our liberality for great and noble purposes of beneficence, which it will be in our power to answer more extensively, as well as more easily, by an increase of reputable members.

“ We owe it to our own children who very shortly must be expelled from our sanctuary, unless room be made for them.

“ We owe it, finally, to the great interests of religious truth and order which our Lord and Master has committed to our hands, and which we are bound both by his authority and his love to extend as far as we can.

“ The measure, therefore, which I have taken the freedom to recommend, *must* come into operation before long, whether we will or whether we will not. In this alternative, the sooner the better. If it is to be done at all, my persuasion is, that it should be done *now*. My reasons are these:

“ That which *must be done* hereafter, and *may* be done now, ought, for that reason alone, to be done *now*.

“ They who do not seize Time by the *forelock*, will find it very difficult to hold him by the *back of*

the head. In plain words : if we wait till circumstances command us, when it is in our power to command circumstances, we commit an act of indiscretion of which we shall repent but once, and that is for ever after. This congregation has already lost to an immense amount of comfort, if not of property, by permitting *occasions* to pass by unimproved.

“ The impediments to the public prosperity are again removed, and the return of commerce and active business has diffused cheerfulness and spirit through the community. Strike while the iron is *hot*. Six months hence may be too late.

“ There is a strong religious sensibility in the city, peculiarly favorable to the undertaking.

“ The congregation is ripe for it. It is a subject of conversation and anxiety: and some are ready to step forward with liberal donations.

“ A number of respectable and religious families are waiting to see if they can be accommodated. They cannot and ought not to remain unsettled. The prospect of procuring seats will determine them. Otherwise they must and will go elsewhere.

“ The expense of building will be much less to us than to others, after allowing for the ground and materials already our own; and, deducting from the additional cost the amount of donations which will be made, the balance will be comparatively trifling; and, by a judicious mode of arranging

the finances of the congregation, will be speedily extinguished. Had the thing been done seven years ago, we might now have flourished in an eminent degree, and been nearly if not entirely out of debt. Should the present opportunity be suffered to slip, we may in vain look for another like it for a dozen years to come. There are *critical periods* in the history of societies as well as of individuals, which, if once lost, are lost forever. The present seems to be such with us. Should the trustees see the matter in this light, as I flatter myself they will, not an hour should be lost in forming their purpose, making it *public*, and following it up with *active measures*. The whole extent of my personal efforts they know they can command, and that I am,

“ With perfect respect and attachment,

“ Their much obliged and obedient,

“ J. M. MASON.

“ *New York, 16th May, 1809.*

“ The Chairman of the Trustees of the S. P. Church.”

The subject was certainly important ; the manner of communicating it respectful ; and the reasons for a prompt attention to it, not absolutely contemptible. Yet notwithstanding the subject, the manner, and the reasons, I never heard one syllable from the board till about six months after ; that is, on the 7th of November. And all that I

then got was this laconic message, that they had “postponed the consideration thereof for the present!!” I shall not affect to conceal that I was deeply wounded. A right to judge for themselves they undoubtedly had; and I never thought of objecting to their freest exercise of it, however different their conclusions might be from my own. But I, too, had my rights. On a subject deeply interesting to my private peace, my public character, and the prosperity of our churches, I felt that I had a right to be heard; to be heard speedily; to have my proposals fully considered; and if they should be inadmissible, to have the reasons for rejecting them fairly stated. But that such a paper as I offered should be tossed carelessly aside—that I should be suspended on the tenter hook of anxiety for six months—that even the consideration of my memorial should then be postponed, indefinitely, without the smallest notice by the board of one of my reasons, and without assigning one of their own, was such a departure from all the decorum of life, that submission to it would have been inconsistent with self-respect, and would have curdled the very milk of Christian meekness. My feelings were, I believe, intelligibly conveyed to the board in another letter three days after; and there the business, under that view of it, ended. I wish to be perfectly understood as referring to the Trustees in their *corporate* not their *individual*

capacity; and as criticising their *act*, not their *motives*. I had not then, nor have I now, the smallest suspicion that they, or any one of them, *intended* to be uncivil. For I have not yet learned to suspect a bad motive, when a better is equally reasonable. I had ever ranked them among my personal friends; I had done nothing either to incur their resentment, or to forfeit their esteem; and therefore I could not, without violence to my own mind, impute to them any wilful contumely, although their *act* was pretty highly spiced with that quality. I regret the necessity of adverting to this occurrence at all. But as it is an essential link in the chain of events which led to my present application, the mention of it was unavoidable.

Whatever injury the message of the Trustees did to their intention, their *act* could not be mistaken. It was, unequivocally, their official negative upon the scheme of a new church. What other interpretation could it bear? To say the very least, such a postponement, after so many months for deliberation, betrayed an indifference, which, when hard pressed, would break out into resistance. With a bias of so much wealth and influence, as centered in the board, against my plan, or without that bias for it, how should it succeed? I could not reasonably imagine the Trustees to be alone in their feelings and policy; for I never so much as dreamed that a proposal to build

a new church should find its way into the box of secrets. There was also no method of bringing the question fairly up, but what should put myself at issue with the Trustees before the bar of the congregation—an experiment fit only for madness to adopt. Each side would have had its supporters; and a miracle could hardly have saved us from intestine war. Such a consequence my soul shuddered at; and resolved upon no account to hazard.

I entreat my brethren to look, now, upon my situation. Two years before, I had told my people that I saw their prosperity fading for want of attentions which it was impossible for me to give; that I could not consent to the further progress of the mischief; and besought them not merely for my sake, but for their own; for the sake of their families, for the sake of the church of God, to provide an additional minister. The measure is declined; and the only reason which had even the show of solidity is the burden which it would impose on the poor. I wait patiently for a fit opportunity of meeting this difficulty: I find it in circumstances favorable to the erection of a larger house of worship; an expedient which, in the nature of things, would have thrown the weight where it ought to lie, upon the shoulders of the rich; and would have extended our resources through their means. The plan is smothered for

six months ; it is, then, dismissed, unconsidered, without the common forms of courtesy. When called up in private conversation, it is opposed by men of influence ; and, to my utter astonishment, opposed upon the old ground—sympathy for the poor ! In short, I perceived a fixed determination to discountenance and defeat it. What is the amount ? “ You have told us, sir, that the duties of the congregation cannot be performed, nor its interests cherished, nor your own heart be at peace, without an assistant. You shall have no assistant.” “ Why not ? ” “ We cannot furnish one without so raising the rents in our little church as to distress the poor.” “ Build another one, and let the rich bear the burden.” “ No, sir, collegiate charges are bad. It would not look well to have one minister in the pulpit and another sitting and hearing him—you will drive the poor away. In one word, you shall not have an assistant upon any terms ; and your comfort, and your cares, and the interests of the congregation, may help themselves as well as they can.”

I do not say that this process passed formally through any man's mind : but I say that it is the true language of the *conduct* which I am considering. What, then, was to be done ? The only plan which could be devised for cherishing this people, consistently with my remaining their minister and the head of our seminary, had been rejected under

both its forms. The alternatives are plain. Either I must foster the seminary to the detriment of my congregation; or my congregation to the detriment of the seminary; or I must resign my pastoral charge. Could even a very moderate understanding, co-operating with upright principle, hesitate for a moment? Retain my charge under all its embarrassments; after my solemn and public declarations; at the expense of wringing my heart, polluting my conscience, and stamping on my forehead the brand of hypocrisy! Abandon our infant seminary! Lay the axe to the root of a tree which the Lord's own right hand hath planted! Which his gracious providence has watered; and of which his people are beginning to eat the fruit! Pour blasting and mildew over the green hope of our churches! Give the signal to Hell for a burst of Pæans to another triumph of her darkness! The suggestion is enough to make the Devil blush. Nay, sir, to that institution I will say as the mourning prophet to the holy city—*If I forget thee, let my right hand forget her cunning.* With that institution, whatever be the absurd confidence of dreamers,—with that institution, in all human probability, our churches stand or fall. In providing liberally for it, we are providing the bread of life and the water of life for generations to come. In permitting it to languish and to die, we shall help to bring on a famine of

the word of the Lord under which our children and our children's children will sink down into the arms of the second death. To the great interests of religion, many of which are bound up in that institution, I must be devoted in body, soul, and spirit. This is the sort of work for which God made me, "And wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" Far from my eyes be the gloom of that day; I mean, the blackness of that night—in which this fountain of life-blood to our churches shall be dried up. In the event of such a catastrophe, unless my views materially change, or providence should find me other appropriate employment, I should consider, and without prejudice to the authority to which I am subject, I beg the declaration may be remembered, I should consider my ministerial commission as abrogated; and myself ordered, by my master in Heaven, off ecclesiastical ground.

Since, then, it was my duty to promote the greatest good of both my congregation and of the seminary; and since the continuance of my present relation involved the sacrifice of the one to the other, there was no choice. I was shut up to the *necessity* of resigning my pastoral charge. I say "*shut up* to this necessity;" for the facts which I have submitted to the Presbytery show, that it was not of my own seeking, nor of my own creating; that I struggled hard to shun it; but was

compelled to it; and I was compelled by nothing more directly than by the measures which were deemed proper by some of the brethren whom it has most deeply offended.

I announced my purpose to the congregation in my letter of the 12th of March last. But before making this communication I had explored the consequences, and considered in what manner they might be directed to the happiest issue. The death of a good plan is often the birth of a better. God disappoints our hope, that he may give us something greater than we had hoped for. More than once has he been thus bountiful to my feeble efforts; I trust he will be so now. To quit the seminary, the city, or the pulpit; to take another parochial charge; to maintain my family with my private property, or upon the public fund, were equally out of the question. The expedient which presented itself as precisely suited to these complicated emergencies, was the *erection of a third church*, upon such a scale and upon such principles as should allow me to *preach the gospel statedly*, should also insure the benefit of a *complete pastor*, and should be able, without difficulty to provide for both. This new plan was to be surveyed in two lights:

1st. As desirable.

2d. As practicable.

To me it appeared every way preferable to the

first plan of pulling down the old church and erecting a new one on the same site.

The present building, which may last a long time, would be thrown away.

The materials, as I discovered from more correct information than I formerly possessed, would be worth nothing: the expense of preparing them for use being equal to their value when prepared.

The design could not be effected without disturbing the graves of a great number whose friends and families are still in the congregation. On this subject human feelings are intractable; and though their opposition might not perhaps be invincible; yet it would be very strong: would be accompanied with vehement passion; would require very delicate and dexterous management; and even when subdued would leave behind it heart-burnings and animosities.

A third building would yield all the advantages of a new one upon the site of the first, even supposing the old one to be deserted, and we should have the old one into the bargain. So that we should really have two churches for the same sum, which, on the plan of pulling the old church down, would be expended on one, with the mere difference of the ground on which it now stands. A third church, therefore, is preferable on the score of *economy*. It is preferable on much higher accounts.

Three churches in one city, are, in themselves, better for any denomination than two.

A fourth congregation may be formed much more easily from three than a third from two.

Larger revenue for our seminary may be derived from three than from two. And this I viewed as an object of immense importance.

The Presbytery of New York has to sustain the heaviest pressure of our public burdens. It occupies a most interesting position in the body; and therefore, the more you can increase its resources, the more will you promote the good of the whole.

One minister more than our number of pulpits, would enable us to meet pressing calls of public service, which would redound to the benefit of the body, and of religion at large; which are now almost impracticable, and which could then be performed without injuring our general interests through this Presbytery, whose prosperity and adversity are, pre-eminently, the prosperity and adversity of our whole denomination.

New York is fast becoming the London of the United States. The habits and character of such a metropolis exert an incalculable influence. It is, therefore, of unspeakable moment to our state and country, that her habits and character be on the side of that "righteousness which exalteth a nation." The more of pure religion you preserve

and disseminate in her, the more likely are you to produce so blessed a result. And though no one denomination can do everything, yet each denomination may do something. Every evangelical church is one; and every one counts. The erection of a *third* church, is, therefore, most *desirable*. But,

2. Is it *practicable*?

The question can regard no impediment but such as must arise from either want of *wealth* or want of *people*.

The first admits not of a discussion. Should a man seriously assert that there is a lack of wealth, the world would laugh in his face.

But where are your people? It is alleged that we have not enough to fill a third church; and, therefore, it is concluded that such a measure is premature. Had this course of objecting, for I will not call it reasoning, prevailed in other times, instead of two respectable houses of worship, we should now have boasted only a pitiful hovel. When my father came to this city, the whole congregation assembled in a small room; therefore it was a mad speculation to build a church larger than 25 by 20 feet. When the extravagantly big little place which was erected began to overflow, all prudent calculation was set at defiance in the building of the edifice, 66 by 56 feet. And when here, again, we felt ourselves crowded, and ven-

tured upon an additional church larger still, we certainly took leave of our senses! Really, sir, I am ashamed to hear men of any understanding talk so wildly. How shall you increase your numbers when you have not a corner to spare? The only way to get people, if you can hold out other inducements, is to make room for them. You surely do not expect that they will stand in the aisles, or out of doors in sunshine and rain, or enter their names in a book of supplicants, and wait until you shall please to pronounce that there are enough to fill a larger house! In speaking of such egregious trifling it is hardly possible to be grave; and yet the pertinacity with which it is adhered to, proves that there is a grave principle connected with it; and that is, most evidently, a determination to resist the plan contemplated. I shall, therefore, give the objection a more direct answer than it would otherwise deserve.

According to the best computation, the city of New York contains one hundred thousand souls. Supposing, which is much too great an allowance, that one-half will not attend public worship; and allotting, which is also too much, one thousand individuals, or one hundred and sixty-seven families upon an average to each congregation, we should then need fifty places of worship for our present population. Now reckoning everything in the shape of a church, their whole number does

not exceed forty-six. Deducting those which are merely nominal, the remainder does not exceed forty or forty-two at the utmost; so that we want for that part of our actual population which would attend the Christian ordinances if they had opportunity, not less than eight or ten new places of worship calculated for one hundred and sixty-seven families each: and our population is increasing every hour. Therefore, unless we pay ourselves the ungracious compliment of believing that we carry about with us some Gorgon head to frighten folks from our sanctuary, when they eagerly flock to every other which can receive them, the fear that we shall not have people enough is altogether idle.

The general argument from this state of our population is enforced by experience. A few years ago our brethren of the General Assembly erected a new church near Corlaer's hook. It was soon filled up—the Methodists have erected new churches, and they are filled up—the Baptists have pulled down one church, and they have built another in its place, and it is filled up. They have since added others. The Reformed Dutch Church built a new one a very short time since, and it is filled up. Only two years ago, another Presbyterian Church was built in Cedar street, and it is filled up. Both these denominations now need another each: and our Episcopal friends,

provident for futurity, are building and buying in every direction.

What has been our own experience? In 1793 this congregation could show only about one hundred and eighty members. The house is seated for above eight hundred people, and when pressed will hold one thousand. Four years after it was necessary to swarm. A new church rather larger than this was built in Magazine Street. A considerable section of the worshippers in this house removed to that. In less than two years they were replaced, and the new house was also filled. In 1801, when it was settled, the minister entered upon his charge with a body of people, if not greater, certainly not less, than assembled in this place. I do not love to repeat grievances: and, therefore, will not say a syllable of their subsequent calamities; nor of the cause which produced their second vacancy four years after. We know that, as a congregation, they were nearly annihilated. Yet the fragments of this congregation, having been bound together in a call to a new pastor, are already reviving. Even now, before the youth of high and early promise whom they have chosen, is set apart to his office, a stream of fresh population is pouring in upon them.

For ourselves, in this place, we have been long surcharged. A contrary representation has, indeed, gone forth; and from the idea that none have ap-

plied without being accommodated the people have been left to *infer* that little if any more accommodation can be necessary. This is all a deception. I do not say *intentional* ; but still a deception, and a gross one. It is not correct in point of fact. I can produce instance upon instance to disprove it. And if it were, the inference would be false. Multitudes who wished to be with us did not apply, because they considered their application to be hopeless. And thus reputable families have successively passed us by and been compelled to join others who had more precaution than ourselves. But why resort to external evidence? Let those who have really any doubts consult their senses. Let them believe their own eyes. Look around these walls. Every inch that can be covered with anything in the shape of a pew, is occupied. With here and there an exception, the square pews have two, and some three, families each. If an individual wants a seat, there must be inquiry, calculation, negotiation, intreaty, in order to get it. Two evils are the immediate effects. *First*, our aggregate revenue is greatly diminished. The rent of a pew is divided among its occupants. The church gets no more from its numbers, but the individuals give less. The same families which, if there was room, would pay for two or three pews, pay only for one. *Secondly*, the seat-holders have it not in their power to bring

their friends with them ; and thus the most certain and regular fountain of supply and growth to a church, is almost dried up.

With such facts staring us in the face, we are gravely asked, Where are your people ? It really sickens one's heart. If the existing circumstances of our city do not promise complete and speedy success to the plan which I have unfolded, there is no reckoning upon human things. Moral certainty is at an end. It was never yet seen that a proper ministry wanted hearers. Plant down an able and faithful minister *anywhere*, not under the reprobation of God for despising the gospel, and there is no fear of his preaching to the walls. In New York, at the present juncture, the encouragement is flattering beyond former example. Our ascended Lord has shed down his blessing ; there has been and there is yet, a steady and increasing anxiety for his word and ordinances. This is the time when every eye should be vigilant, every heart alert, and every arm nerved. Yet this is the time in which those to whom, in my charge, it peculiarly appertained to be active, have chosen to do nothing. It was not my duty to wait upon their tardiness, nor to slumber in their languor. I have acted accordingly.

Such, sir, are the reasons which governed my conduct. I covet no subterfuge. I shrink from no scrutiny. "My record is on high." Most

gladly would I now leave myself with my brethren, and retire from the further consideration of a question which has convulsed me with agony. But I owe to myself and to truth the indispensable duty of adverting to the treatment which I have received from quarters where I had a right to expect different things. I have been so long accustomed to be misrepresented; and I have so uniformly repaid calumny with contempt, that had the present been a common occasion, I should have contented myself with saying, "To me it is a small matter to be judged of you or of man's judgment;" and should not have turned upon my heel to avoid the imputations which have been heaped upon me. But forbearance has bounds. Impunity must not always embolden slander. There is neither wisdom nor religion in a man's allowing himself to be bitten, without resistance, by the tooth of detraction, when, as in the affair before us, the poison spreads into the remotest veins of his reputation.

Against my people, as I have said, I bring no accusation. Even with injurious individuals, whom alone the subsequent remarks will annoy, I shall have no personal controversy. My object is to vindicate myself, not to criminate others. Personalities, therefore, I shall have none; nor any thing which can be supposed to have a personal bearing, unless conscience be the interpreter, or

the authors of unkind insinuations have already published themselves.

If ever my intentions were pure, my views disinterested, and my efforts directed to a good and noble end, I think they have been so in the measures which have now excited resentment, bitterness, and reproach. I had flattered myself that men who profess to be my friends might dissent from my opinion without disputing my veracity. Yet notwithstanding the tender and solemn declarations of the letter which you have heard, my testimony has been spurned; and the *substance*, the *motives*, the *controlling influence*, and the *form* of my proceedings acrimoniously censured.

With the evil which cleaves to human conduct there is, for the most part, a mixture of good. Bad plans often originate in good motives; bad motives enter into good plans. The best influences fail from an improper method of operation; and influence of the most hurtful sort finds shelter and acceptance in a popular manner. But in *my* policy, it seems, there was not so much as an *alloy* of good. The plans were bad; motives bad; influence bad; mode bad; all bad together—a frightful mass of depravity and folly.

“I have deserted my post; I have forsaken my friends; I have rent the congregation—I have been actuated by mere pride. I have become

tired of my poor, religious people; and want to sacrifice them for the rich and great who have little or no religion. I have learned to despise the friends of my father and my own friends, who took me up and fostered me into all the consideration I possess. I have grown ashamed of my father's countrymen and country. I have trampled upon the practical wisdom of the good old men; and have yielded myself to the direction of those with whom I have not even been brought up, and, that no species of evil counsel might be wanting, I have fallen into the snare, and been prompted by the instigation of the Devil—and the whole, whether unadvised or ill-advised, has been done with rash and headstrong temerity.”

Is it possible that such suggestions can proceed from Christian lips? They are applicable to none but a monster of iniquity. They have all been applied to me, though perhaps not all by the same person. And for what? Why truly, Moderator, because I would not retain a trust which I cannot fulfil! because I wish to promote, on the largest scale in my power, the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ! because I propose to form a new congregation with a direct reference to this end! But let us examine these charges.

1. “*My conduct has been bad in itself. I have deserted my post. I have abandoned my friends. I have rent the congregation!*”

No, sir, I have not. I never yet deserted my post, nor abandoned my friends, nor promoted discord. I have publicly announced my intention of asking a *release* from my present charge. But release is not desertion. It was not from my friends, nor from the congregation that I wanted a discharge; it was from an obligation to impossible duties. I shall be *pastorally* separated from those who befriend me, as much as from any of those who have expressed a wish to see me "humbled." I shall be *personally*, and in pulpit-services, separated from none of them but by their own choice. If there be any desertion, it is not I who desert them, but they who desert me. There is nothing to hinder them all from enjoying my ministrations as formerly, if they please. Should the whole congregation go along, it will only be moving from an old house to a new one. I own I would not wish it; because I wish to see *three* congregations, and all of them flourishing. I own I do not expect it; because I think it contrary to the principles of human action. And this was the basis of part of my calculation. But surely, sir, if some, following their own inclination, had rather remain where they are, they might have done so with good temper. There was no necessity for abusing me; and, I verily think, no Christianity in it. But it is, above all, most marvellous to profess their regard to my ministrations to be the cause of their disquietude.

and prove that regard by preferring walls and benches to me and my ministrations too! To insist that they are grieved to part with me; then to tear themselves away by their own act; and then, to turn round with wrath upon me for deserting them! Really, sir, this is out-sternholding Sternhold, in the highest style of performance.

2. My *motives* were vile. "I have been actuated by mere pride. I wanted to sacrifice my poor, religious, people of whom I have grown ashamed, to the irreligious rich and great. I despise my father's country, countrymen and friends, to whom I owe everything," &c. &c.

To all such insinuations I might, and to most of them I shall, oppose the unvaried tenor of my life.

Moderator, I have served this people for more than seventeen years. Malevolent eyes have continually watched me, and I challenge the world to produce a single plan or measure of mine to justify in the slightest degree the gentlest, (if the distinction of more and less gentle has place among them), to justify, I repeat it, the gentlest of all those foul insinuations. Opulence and grandeur I have sacrificed to the church of God—to this people—and they know it. Talent, in our country, need not enter the pulpit without being in some degree allied to the spirit of martyrdom. The road to wealth and honors takes another direction. Other things being equal, the ministry, of all human pro-

fessions, is the most helpless and unfriended. Since the time of my settlement here, lawyers, merchants, physicians, have made their fortunes; not an industrious and prudent mechanic but has laid up something for his family. But should God call me away to-morrow, after expending the flower of my life, *my* family could not show a single cent for the gain of more than seventeen years' toil. And were it not for some private property quite insufficient for their maintenance and education, my wife and her children would be set adrift upon the world without bread to eat, or raiment to put on. And yet, after my giving one of the strongest possible proofs of disinterestedness, men who have been accumulating the good things of this world, and enjoying their religion too, come forward to show their Christian zeal by charging me with motives not only selfish, but meanly and basely selfish. One would hope that the charity which thinketh no evil, might put a good construction where it is easy; and not rack its invention in search of an evil one, when it has first to get rid of both presumption and proof to the contrary.

I am forcibly reminded of a memorable passage in the history of David. The Philistine of Gath had defied the armies of Israel, so that "they were dismayed and sore afraid." The stripling son of Jesse, who had gone down at his father's command to see his brethren in the field, heard the

words of the boaster. His spirit rises: his blood fires: he offers himself to the combat. Shall not, now, all Israel cheer the gallant boy? Shall not his bravery, his zeal, his love of country, his devotion to God, fill every heart with affection, and every tongue with applause? Shall not his brothers feel their bosoms swell with virtuous elation before this rising glory of their name? Yet hear! "Eliab's anger was kindled against David, and he said, why camest thou down thither? And with whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know thy *pride*, and the *naughtiness of thy heart*, for thou hast come down that thou mightest see the battle." The language of David was noble, his resolution heroic; his object most magnanimous; and yet his friend, his kinsman, his brother, falls into a passion—charges him with deserting his post—impeaches his motives. This uncourteous greeting, a little modernized, would sound as follows. "You pretend great regard for the honor of God, and the good of Israel, but it is your pride, sir; it is your dissatisfaction with your trust—it is your anxiety, and a corrupt one, to catch at an opportunity of gratifying your ambition, which has drawn you from your flock to the army. Go tend your sheep, sir, and it will be better for you!" All this from a brother! Aye, from a brother! "What have I now done?" said the young saviour of

Israel; "is there not a cause?" Yes, cause enough: honorable cause: cause of which God shall transmit his approbation to the latest ages. What then is the matter with Eliab? he overlooks the plain fact, and goes a *motive-hunting*. There is an explanation. Why, what evil has David done? what evidence is there of his bad intention? None at all. Ah! but Eliab's *vanity* had been mortified in the affair of the kingdom!

3. The *influence* which swayed me is vile. "Keen sighted observers have penetrated the conclave; have discovered the wicked advisers; nay, have read the interior of my heart, and detected the machinations of the evil one—I have fallen into temptation."

On that rudeness which, uninformed of facts and undesirous of information, has invaded my private friendships, and has not spared even the hallowed circle of my family, I shall not descend so low as to make a single remark.

The detection of the Devil in this matter is somewhat curious.

We live in rare times. The love of change has taken a most boundless sweep. The infernal cabinet has not escaped. Hell has revolutioned her policy; and the Devil tempts men to build churches to the glory of God our Saviour, and to work hard for the effectual preparation of an evangelical ministry! This is the best argument

I ever yet heard for the dogma of universal salvation; as it shows something like the dawnings of repentance and reformation, in a region whose history has been hitherto rather an awkward comment on the doctrine of our hyper-benevolent theologues. However, let me put in a word for Satan on this subject. I do verily believe him to be as innocent of aiding and abetting my plans for promoting the prosperity of the Christian church, as a devil can well be of wilfully undermining his own power. Seriously, sir, what must we think of this doctrine of temptation? It goes a great way. It embraces all of our own connection either in the congregation or out of it, who deem my plan a good one and worthy of support. It reaches to every minister and private Christian in other denominations, (and they are not a few), who have expressed themselves favorably, and have wondered at the "infatuation" of the opposition. Men friendly and unfriendly to us; religious and irreligious; have united in their judgment that the plan is well calculated to produce a strong, and beneficial result; and some of our own friends cannot explain its origin or operation without having recourse to the machinery of the pit! Perhaps they may flinch from this picture; and disclaim such sentiments. Well. Why then do they talk of temptation? And why do they continue hostile? "He casteth out devils by Bel-

zebub the prince of the devils," said the Pharisees of our Lord Jesus Christ. "By whom then, replied he, do your sons cast them out?" The devil tempts me to aim at an object confessedly good. Who tempts the opposers?

But if every other objection were set aside; if substance, motive, influence, were all right; still,

4. The *form* of my procedure was totally wrong. How? I concealed my intention. I told not my congregation. I consulted not with my friends whose age and experience entitle them to confidence. Instead of gradually preparing the way, I took all by surprise." And this is a principal source of offence and difficulty.

What, sir? Do Christian men say, that no plan however good shall have their support unless they can appear as original movers of it? And that they will disobey their understanding, their conscience, and their master too, without a previous compliment to their vanity? I hope not. But the objection says so. It was surely inconsiderate. I shall press the matter no further.

But how were all taken by surprise? I had told the Session, the Trustees, the assembled congregation, more than two years before, that I could not and would not consent to the continuance of that unprosperous state of their affairs which I intreated them to remedy. Was *this* no warning? Did they think all my representations to be mere

sound ? A matter for a week's speculation, never more to be thought of ? Is it my habit thus to trifle ? When I renewed the subject, eighteen months after, in my communication to the Trustees, was *this* no warning ? Did not *this* furnish to that respectable board a proof that patience is not submission ? That I had not lost sight of my object, and was not to be diverted from its pursuit ? If they overlooked so plain an admonition, and composed themselves to sleep for six months longer, the fault is not mine. When they had rejected my proposal under the guise of a postponement, I spoke still more pointedly. In my letter, written three days after their very singular message to me, viz. on the 10th of November last, I went so far as to say, that since they rejected every plan which I could propose for promoting the good of the congregation, without offering any substitute, and without taking any step whatever for removing the existing difficulties, I should trouble them no more—that I held myself utterly irresponsible for consequences—that nothing remained for me but to look out for some expedient for relieving myself and my congregation from our common embarrassment—an expedient in which, for aught I knew, the concurrence of the Trustees might not be necessary ! Was *this* no warning ? What was it ? I thought it rather a broad hint—but it was not taken. That I could not help. I had, some weeks

after, an explanatory conversation with a committee of the board, who treated me with all the kindness and delicacy which became friends and gentlemen. But though I put the question directly as to the intention of the board on this most interesting topic, I could not get so much as even an opinion. Four months more slipped away, and nothing was done, nor likely to be done. I had long made up my purpose conditionally; I now made it up definitively; and, as I said to the congregation, "the die was cast." These, Moderator, are facts. They are almost all upon record. The documents will speak for themselves. And yet a clamor is raised against me for taking everybody by surprise. I did no such thing. I did not, indeed, say, in so many words, "I shall give up my charge unless you comply with my request." It would not have been discreet. But I certainly put the board in a way of drawing an inference for themselves with no other trouble than that of putting two very simple ideas together. If they were not at that trouble I am not to blame.

"But, after all, why did I not *consult* before I decided?" Consult whom? About what? "My congregation; or, at least my experienced friends in the congregation."

Really, sir, the reception which all my previous overtures met with left me no heart to try another experiment. I had consulted and intreated, and

remonstrated, and waited, without effect. Why should I subject myself to a new risk of finding how little my reasonings and my feelings were regarded? But I own that, without such a drawback, I would not have been, on the point of my resignation, a whit more communicative. I will tell you why.

To consult the whole congregation would have been a burlesque upon all counsel. How could so mixed a mass be either competent or impartial advisers? Consult them about the propriety of parting with what they professed to love! Is there a man living so unschooled in the knowledge of men as not to see that this is an absurdity? Would demonstration itself persuade any people on earth to give up, of their own accord, a minister whom they prize and are able to support? To consult them would be to ask them to set their faces with all their might against the project. It would kindle a flame; it could procure no counsel.

But I ought to have consulted "the respectable and experienced members of the congregation." That is, the very persons who were not to rouse nor repress, but simply to direct the popular feeling. I might as well have gone, at once, to the popular feeling itself. There were other difficulties.

I had no experience to consult. Far from my thoughts be the least disrespect to men who, in their sphere, are worthy of all consideration. But

human experience is as various as human pursuit. A man may have a world of experience on one subject and none at all on another. If I want to embark in a mercantile speculation, I will consult the experience of the merchant. If I labor under a dangerous disease, I will consult the experience of the physician. If I am going to set up machinery, I will consult the experience of the mechanic. If I wish to form a correct judgment on a point of national policy, I will consult the experience of the statesman. But I will never go to a statesman for advice about a steam-engine; nor to the doctor for instruction about the foreign market, any more than I shall go to the merchant with a cancer, or to the bricklayer with a matter of state. Neither will I, in the discussion of a question which is to be settled by balancing general principles and relations, apply to an experience which lies quite in another course. The experience of merchants and mechanics is most important in its place; but in measuring my faculties with their appropriate objects, and in ascertaining the bearings of our public interests, was of no use to me. When, therefore, I am reproved for not consulting my *experienced* friends, the reprover ought first to show that their experience was of the proper sort. To stand alone, is, in fact, one of the evils incident to men who take a position or form a plan which is not embraced by the ordinary routine of life. Con-

sultation with an experience which has nothing in common with their views and feelings, can only multiply difficulties and vexations. Their path is up hill; and they can gain nothing but additional labor by inviting half a dozen or half a score of acquaintances, who will never be persuaded by anything but success, to hang each his weight about their necks. They must decide for themselves upon their own responsibility. I knew the condition, I accepted it, and have nothing to repent of, to retract, nor retread.

Supposing, however, that I had adopted the method which has been dictated to me: let us see how it would have worked. Either my communications would have been kept secret or not. If kept secret they could no more benefit the congregation, than the secrecy of the trustees about the proposal for a new church. When divulged, as they must have been sooner or later, they would have given as great a shock as my letter of the 12th March; and would have been greeted with the indignation of the people, who would have considered themselves as handed over to the mercy of a few dark intriguers. Reverse the picture. Had the secret been blown, as most undoubtedly it would, not only should I and my confidants have been involved in a thousand angry disputes; but it would have been said, not, unplausibly, that I was fomenting a faction in the congregation to

dispose of their dearest possessions without their knowledge or consent.

My counsellors too, might have differed, and given opposite advices. Follow both I could not. They whose advice was not followed would have been quite as much displeased to have it rejected, as not to have it asked. It is also far from improbable that my own results would have differed from both, as much as they from each other; and so all would have been affronted. It would then have been discovered that I never meant to be advised at all; that I only made use of my friends as a screen for myself; and mocked them under the semblance of respect. It would have been said, that I enjoyed the advantage of all the intelligence, prudence, and experience of the best men in the congregation, and treated them with contempt. Would this have mended the matter? These are not after-reasonings. They passed distinctly through my mind long before I acted. I thought them then, and I still think them conclusive; and that the course which I took was the least hazardous, the most delicate, and every way the best. I have had no cause to change my opinion: for after the multiform investigation which the subject has undergone, I have not acquired a single new fact; nor have I heard a single objection which I had not frequently examined and dismissed.

A word more on this head. Considerable resentment was occasioned by a suspicion, which, as usual, soon grew into an assertion, that while I had neglected my old friends, I had all along consulted with others, who had much less claim to my confidence. I heard of this, among a thousand other falsehoods; and to counteract it sent to the congregation a written declaration that I had formed my resolution without the advice or knowledge of a human being. The letter containing this declaration was publicly read; and yet, sir, the same insinuation, now become indecent and insulting, was afterwards repeated to me in no very equivocal manner; it was the lie direct in everything but the formality of the expression.

I have expounded myself without reserve, and now I cast myself upon the candor of my brethren.

They will judge whether I have acted honorably or basely; and whether or not I have deserved the "hard speeches" which have been uttered against me, even by those who insist that they are my friends. In some instances violence of meaning has been accompanied with mildness of manner. But a dagger is not the less murderous because its point has been steeped in oil. But I have done; I wait the issue.

Me, sir, nothing can take by surprise. I am alike prepared for success or for defeat. I am prepared to see our holiest interests

to see them languish—prepared to see our budding hope, our little seminary, branch out its honors, shed abroad its foliage, and multiply its fruits; or withered, from the blossom to the root, by the deadly East-wind of prejudice and parsimony—prepared to see the men who shall refuse their becoming offerings to build up the temple of the Lord of Hosts, put their money in a bag with holes: sow much and reap little; their fortunes scattered to the winds of heaven; and the iniquity of their covetousness or of their passion visited upon their children's children. The flying roll wherein is written “mourning, and lamentation, and woe,” passes swiftly over the nations. I hear the portentous roaring of wild misrule. I see approaching the cloud of desolation which is to rain down upon the slumbering churches its tempest of brimstone and salt. My heart is pained within me.

For myself, an atom in the sum of things, God can do as well without me as with me. The paramount desire of my soul is to proclaim that Saviour whom I hope to meet in the clouds of Heaven; and to assist in rearing up young heralds of his truth, who shall fight his battles and bear his glory when my feeble voice shall be heard no more, and my clay shall mingle with its kindred earth. I thank my Lord for all the goodness and mercy which have followed me to this day. But if the

hand which has lifted me up is about to cast me down—"If he shall thus say, I have no delight in thee; behold, here am I, let him do to me as seemeth good unto him."

Dr. MASON'S request was granted; and on Friday the 25th of May, he was released from his pastoral charge.

A C O N T R A S T

BETWEEN THE

DEATH OF A DEIST AND THE DEATH OF A CHRISTIAN

BEING

A SUCCINCT ACCOUNT OF THAT CELEBRATED INFIDEL,

DAVID HUME, ESQ.

AND OF THAT

EXCELLENT MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL,

SAMUEL FINLEY, D.D.

IN THEIR LAST MOMENTS.

A C O N T R A S T,

ETC.

Letter from Adam Smith, LL.D. to William Strahan, Esq., giving some account of Mr. Hume, during his last sickness.

Kirkaldy, Fife Shire, Nov. 9, 1776.

DEAR SIR,—It is with a real, though a very melancholy pleasure, that I sit down to give you some account of the behavior of our late excellent friend, Mr. Hume, during his last illness. Though, in his own judgment, his disease was mortal and incurable, yet he allowed himself to be prevailed upon, by the entreaty of his friends, to try what might be the effects of a long journey. A few days before he set out, he wrote that account of his own life, which, together with his other papers, he left to your care. My account, therefore, shall begin where his ends.

He set out for London towards the end of April, and at Morpeth met with Mr. John Home and myself, who had both come down from London on purpose to see him, expecting to have found him at Edinburgh. Mr. Home returned with him, and attended him during the whole of his stay in England, with that care and attention which might be expected from a temper so perfectly friendly and affectionate. As I had written to my mother that she might expect me in Scotland, I was under the necessity of continuing my journey. His disease seemed to yield to exercise and change of air; and when he arrived in London, he was apparently in much better health than when he left Edinburgh. He was advised to go to Bath to drink the waters, which appeared for some time to have so good an effect upon him, that even he himself began to entertain, what he was not apt to do, a better opinion of his own health. His symptoms, however, soon returned with their usual violence; and from that moment he gave up all thoughts of recovery, but submitted with the utmost cheerfulness, and the most perfect complacency and resignation. Upon his return to Edinburgh, though he found himself much weaker, yet his cheerfulness never abated, and he continued to divert himself, as usual, with correcting his own works for a new edition, with reading books of amusement, with the conversation of his friends;

and, sometimes in the evening, with a party at his favorite game of whist. His cheerfulness was so great, and his conversation and amusements run so much in their usual strain, that, notwithstanding all bad symptoms, many people could not believe he was dying. "I shall tell your friend, Colonel Edmondstone," said Doctor Dundas to him one day, "that I left you much better, and in a fair way of recovery." "Doctor," said he, "as I believe you would not choose to tell anything but the truth, you had better tell him that I am dying as fast as my enemies, if I have any, could wish, and as easily and cheerfully as my best friends could desire."

Colonel Edmonstone soon after came to see him, and take leave of him; and on his way home, he could not forbear writing him a letter, bidding him once more an eternal adieu, and applying to him, as to a dying man, the beautiful French verses, in which the Abbe Chaulieu, in expectation of his own death, laments his approaching separation from his friend, the Marquis De La Fare.

Mr. Hume's magnanimity and firmness were such, that his most affectionate friends knew that they hazarded nothing in talking or writing to him as to a dying man, and that so far from being hurt by this frankness, he was rather pleased and flattered by it. I happened to come into his room

while he was reading this letter, which he had just received, and which he immediately showed me. I told him, that though I was sensible how very much he was weakened, and that appearances were in many respects very bad, yet his cheerfulness was still so great, the spirit of life seemed to be still so very strong in him, that I could not help entertaining some faint hopes. He answered, "Your hopes are groundless. An habitual diarrhea of more than a year's standing, would be a very bad disease at any age: at my age it is a mortal one. When I lie down in the evening, I feel myself weaker than when I rose in the morning; and when I rise in the morning, I feel myself weaker than when I lay down in the evening. I am sensible, besides, that some of my vital parts are affected, so that I must soon die." "Well," said I, "if it must be so, you have at least the satisfaction of leaving all your friends, your brother's family in particular, in great prosperity." He said that he felt that satisfaction so sensibly, that when he was reading, a few days before, Lucian's Dialogues of the Dead, among all the excuses which are alleged to Charon, for not entering readily into his boat, he could not find one that fitted him; he had no house to finish, he had no daughter to provide for, he had no enemies upon whom he wished to revenge himself. "I could not well imagine," said he, "what excuse

I could make to Charon, in order to obtain a little delay. I have done everything of consequence which I ever meant to do, and I could at no time expect to leave my relations and friends in a better situation than that in which I am now likely to leave them; I, therefore, have all reason to die contented." He then diverted himself with inventing several jocular excuses which he supposed he might make to Charon, and with imagining the very surly answers which it might suit the character of Charon to return to them. "Upon further consideration," said he, "I thought I might say to him, 'Good Charon, I have been correcting my works for a new edition. Allow me a little time that I may see how the public receives the alterations.' But Charon would answer, 'When you have seen the effect of these, you will be for making other alterations. There will be no end of such excuses; so, honest friend, please step into the boat.' But I might still urge, 'Have a little patience, good Charon; I have been endeavoring to open the eyes of the public. If I live a few years longer, I may have the satisfaction of seeing the downfall of some of the prevailing systems of superstition.' But Charon would then lose all temper and decency. 'You loitering rogue, that will not happen these many hundred years. Do you fancy I will grant you a lease for so long a

time? Get into the boat this instant, you lazy, loitering rogue.' ”

But, though Mr. Hume always talked of his approaching dissolution with great cheerfulness, he never affected to make any parade of his magnanimity. He never mentioned the subject but when the conversation naturally led to it, and dwelt no longer upon it than the conversation happened to require: it was a subject, indeed, which occurred pretty frequently, in consequence of the inquiries which his friends, who came to see him, naturally made concerning the state of his health. The conversation which I mentioned above, and which passed on Thursday the 8th of August, was the last, except one, that I ever had with him. He had now become so very weak, that the company of his most intimate friends fatigued him; for his cheerfulness was still so great, his complaisance and social disposition were still so entire, that when any friend was with him, he could not help talking more, and with greater exertion, than suited the weakness of his body. At his own desire, therefore, I agreed to leave Edinburgh, where I was staying partly upon his account, and returned to my mother's house here, at Kirkaldy, upon condition that he would send for me whenever he wished to see me; the physician who saw him most frequently, Dr. Black, undertaking in the meantime to write me occasionally an account of the state

of his health. On the 22d of August, the Doctor wrote me the following letter :

“ Since my last, Mr. Hume has passed his time pretty easily, but is much weaker. He sits up, goes down stairs once a day, and amuses himself with reading, but seldom sees anybody. He finds that even the conversation of his most intimate friends fatigues and oppresses him; and it is happy that he does not need it, for he is quite free from anxiety, impatience, or low spirits; and passes his time very well, with the assistance of amusing books.”

I received, the day after, a letter from Mr. Hume myself, of which the following is an extract :

Edinburgh, 23 August, 1776.

My dearest Friend,—I am obliged to make use of my nephew's hand in writing to you, as I do not rise to-day.

*	*	*	*	*	*	*
*	*	*	*	*	*	*

I go very fast to decline, and last night had a small fever, which I hoped might put a quicker period to this tedious illness, but unluckily it has, in a great measure, gone off. I cannot submit to your coming over here on my account, as it is possible for me to see you so small a part of the day; but Doctor Black can better inform you concerning the

degree of strength which may from time to time remain with me. Adieu, &c.

Three days after, I received the following letter from Dr. Black :

Edinburgh, Monday, Aug. 26, 1776.

Dear Sir,—Yesterday, about four o'clock, afternoon, Mr. Hume expired. The near approach of his death became evident in the night between Thursday and Friday, when his disease became excessive, and soon weakened him so much, that he could no longer rise out of his bed. He continued to the last perfectly sensible, and free from much pain or feelings of distress. He never dropped the smallest expression of impatience ; but when he had occasion to speak to the people about him, always did it with affection and tenderness. I thought it improper to write to bring you over, especially as I heard that he dictated a letter to you, desiring you not to come. When he became very weak, it cost him an effort to speak, and he died in such a happy composure of mind that nothing could exceed it.

Thus died our most excellent and never-to-be-forgotten friend ; concerning whose philosophical opinions men will no doubt judge variously, every one approving or condemning them, according as

they happen to coincide or disagree with his own; but concerning whose character and conduct there can scarce be a difference of opinion. His temper, indeed, seemed to be more happily balanced, if I may be allowed such an expression, than that perhaps of any other man I have ever known. Even in the lowest state of his fortune, his great and necessary frugality never hindered him from exercising, upon proper occasions, acts both of charity and generosity. It was a frugality founded not upon avarice, but upon the love of independency. The extreme gentleness of his nature never weakened either the firmness of his mind or the steadiness of his resolutions. His constant pleasantry was the genuine effusion of good nature and good humor, tempered with delicacy and modesty, and without even the slightest tincture of malignity, so frequently the disagreeable source of what is called wit in other men. It never was the meaning of his raillery to mortify; and, therefore, far from offending, it seldom failed to please and delight, even those who were the objects of it. To his friends, who were frequently the objects of it, there was not perhaps any one of all his great and amiable qualities which contributed more to endear his conversation. And that gaiety of temper, so agreeable in society, but which is often accompanied with frivolous and superficial qualities, was, in him, certainly attended with the most severe appli-

cation, the most extensive learning, the greatest depth of thought, and a capacity in every respect the most comprehensive. Upon the whole, I have always considered him, both in his lifetime and since his death, as approaching as nearly to the idea of a perfectly wise and virtuous man, as perhaps the nature of human frailty will permit.

I ever am,

Dear Sir,

Most affectionately yours,

ADAM SMITH.

Some of the last choice words of DOCTOR SAMUEL FINLEY, President of the College of New Jersey.

Friday, July 11, 1776. The Rev. Mr. Richard Treat came to visit the Doctor, who desired that he would pray by him. Being asked what he should pray for, he answered, "Beseech God that he would be pleased to let me feel just as I did at that time when I first closed with Christ, at which time I could scarce contain myself out of heaven."

Dr. S. acquainted him that he could live but a few days longer; at which he lifted up his eyes with much composure, saying, "Then, welcome, Lord Jesus." He declared himself under the greatest obligations to the doctor for his kind and diligent attendance during his illness, and said, "I owe a large catalogue of debts to my friends, which will never be charged to my account; God will discharge them for me."

July 13th, Lord's-day, noon. Dr. C. came to his bed-side, and told him there appeared a very visible alteration in his countenance, by which he judged death was not far off. He raised himself upon his pillow, and broke out, "Then may the Lord bring me *near* to himself—I have waited with a *Canaan hunger* for the promised land—I have often wondered that God suffered me to live

—I have wondered more that ever he called me to be a minister of his word. He has often afforded me much strength, and though I have abused it, he has returned in mercy. Oh! how sweet are the promises of God! Oh! that I could see him as I have seen him heretofore in his sanctuary! Although I have earnestly desired death as the hireling pants for the evening shade, yet will I wait my appointed time. I have struggled with principalities and powers, and have been brought almost to despair—Lord, let it suffice.

He now closed his eyes, and fervently prayed that God would show him his glory before he departed hence—that he would enable him to endure patiently to the end—and particularly, that he might be kept from dishonoring the ministry. He resumed his discourse, saying, “I can truly say that I have loved the service of God—I know not in what language to speak of my own unworthiness: I have been undutiful: I have honestly endeavored to act for God, but with much weakness and corruption.” Here he lay down, and spoke as follows; “A Christian’s death is the best part of his existence. The Lord has made provision for the whole way, provision for the soul and for the body. Oh! that I could recollect sabbath blessings! The Lord has given me many souls as a crown of my rejoicing. Blessed be God, eternal rest is at hand: eternity is long enough to enjoy

my God. This has animated me in my severest studies. I was ashamed to take rest here. Oh! that I could be filled with the fulness of God! that fulness which fills heaven!"

One asked him, if it was in his choice either to live or to die, which he would prefer? He replied, "To *die*. Though I cannot but say, I feel the same difficulty with St. Paul. But should God, by a miracle prolong my life, I will still continue to serve him: his service has ever been sweet to me. I have loved it much. I have tried my Master's yoke, and will never shrink my neck from it. His yoke is easy, and his burden light."

"You are more cheerful, sir," said one of the company. "Yes, I rise or fall as eternal rest appears nearer or further off."

It being observed to him, that he always used that expression, "*Dear Lord*" in his prayers; he answered, "Oh! he is very dear, very precious indeed! How pretty for a minister to die upon the sabbath! I expect to spend the remaining part of this sabbath in heaven."

One said, "You will soon be joined to a blessed society; you will for ever converse with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, with the spirits of just men made perfect, with old friends, and many old-fashioned people. "Yes, sir," he replied with a smile, "but they are a most polite people now."

He frequently expressed great gratitude to his

friends around him, but very particularly to the kind family he was in; and said, "May the Lord repay you for your tenderness of me; may he bless you abundantly, not only with temporal but spiritual blessings." Addressing himself to all that were present, he said, "Oh that each of you may experience what, blessed be God, I do, when ye come to die! May you have the pleasure of reflecting in a dying hour, that with *faith* and *patience*, *zeal* and *sincerity*, you have endeavored to serve the Lord; that each of you may be impressed, as I have been, with God's word, looking upon it as substantial, and not only fearing, but unwilling to offend against it."

To a person about to return to Princeton, he said, "Give my love to the people of Princeton; tell them I am going to die, and that I am not afraid of death." He would sometimes cry out, "The Lord Jesus take care of his cause in the world."

Monday, 14th. Waking this morning, "Oh! what a disappointment have I met with; I expected this morning to have been in heaven!" His great weakness prevented his much speaking to-day: what few words he uttered, breathed the language of triumph.

Tuesday, 15th. With a pleasing smile and strong voice he cried out, "Oh! I shall triumph over every foe! The Lord hath given me the

victory! I exult, I triumph. Oh! that I could see untainted purity! Now I know that it is impossible that faith should not triumph over earth and hell; I think I have nothing to do now but to die. Perhaps I have; Lord, show me my task."

After expressing some fears that he did not endeavor to preserve his remaining life, through eagerness to depart, and being told he did nothing inconsistent with self-preservation, he said, "Lord Jesus, into thine hands I commit my spirit. *I do it with confidence, I do it with full assurance.* I know that thou wilt keep that which I have committed unto thee. I have been dreaming too fast of the time of my departure. I find it does not come; but the Lord is faithful, and will not tarry beyond his appointed time."

When one who attended him told him his pulse grew weaker, he expressed with pleasure, that it was well. He often would put forth his hand to his physicians, and ask them how his pulse beat; and would rejoice when he was told it was fluttering or irregular.

In the afternoon, the Rev. Mr. Spencer came to see him, and said, "I am come, dear sir, to hear you confirm by facts the gospel you have preached. Pray how do you feel?" The doctor replied, "Full of triumph. I triumph through Christ. Nothing clips my wings but the thoughts of my

dissolution being prolonged. Oh! that it was to-night. My very soul thirsts for eternal rest." Mr Spencer asked him, what he saw in eternity to excite such vehement desires in his soul? He replied, "I see a God of love and goodness—I see the fulness of my Mediator—I see the love of Jesus. Oh! to be dissolved; to be with him! I long to be clothed with the complete righteousness of Christ, not only imputed, but inherent." He desired Mr. Spencer to pray before they parted. "Pray that God would preserve me from evil—that he would keep me from dishonoring his great name in this critical hour; and support me in my passage *through the valley of the shadow of death*."

He spent the remaining part of the day in bidding farewell to and blessing his friends; and exhorting such of his children as were with him. He would frequently cry out, "Why move the tardy hours so slow."

July 16th, his speech failed him. He made many efforts to speak, but seldom so distinct as to be understood. Mr. Roberdeau desired him to give some token whereby his friends might know whether he still continued to triumph. He lifted up his hands and said, "Yes." This afternoon he uttered several sentences, but little could be collected from them.

Some of his very last words concerning himself were, "After one or two more engagements the

conflict will be over.” About nine o’clock he fell into a sound sleep, and appeared much freer from pain than for several days before. He continued to sleep, without moving in the least, till one o’clock; when he expired, without a sigh or a groan, or any kind of motion sufficient to alarm his wife, and those friends who were about his bed. During his whole sickness, he was never heard to utter one repining word. He was at times tortured with the most excruciating pains; yet he expressed in all his behavior an entire resignation to the divine will. In all his affecting farewells to his relations and friends, he was never seen to shed a tear, or show the least mark of sorrow. He often checked his affectionate wife when she was weeping; and he expressed his unshaken confidence in the promises of his God, whenever he spoke of his dear children.

His truly polite behavior continued to the last, and manifested itself whenever he called for a drop of drink to wet his lips. Every one around him was treated with that same sweetness and ease that were so peculiar and natural to him. In fine, he was a most striking example of that *faith* which kindles love in the heart, and produces the sweet fruits of meekness, gentleness, patience, and every Christian grace and virtue.”

*Remarks on the preceding accounts of the death of
David Hume, Esq. and Samuel Finley, D.D.*

THE common sense and feelings of mankind have always taught them to consider death as a most awful and interesting event. If it were nothing more than a separation from all that we love in this world—the dissolution of our bodies—and the termination of our present mode of existence—there would be sufficient reason for approaching it with tender and solemn reflection. But when we add those anticipations of which very few, if any, can wholly divest themselves; that scene of “untried being,” which lies before us; and especially *that* eternity which the Christian revelation unfolds, death becomes an object of unutterable moment; and every sober thought of it bears upon the heart with a weight of solicitude which it is not in the power of unaided reason to remove. The mere *possibility* of our living hereafter, is enough to engage the attention of a wise man: the *probability* of it is too grave and affecting to leave an excuse for indifference: and the *certainly* with which the scriptures speak of it, as of an immortality of blessedness or of wo, allows to light and ludicrous speculations concerning it,

no other character than that of the insanity of wickedness.

When that hour draws nigh which shall close the business of life, and summon the spirit to the bar of "God who gave it," all the motives to deception cease, and those false reasonings which blind the judgment are dissipated. It is the hour of truth and of sincerity. Such, at least, is the *general* fact which cannot be invalidated by the concession that, in some instances, men have been found to cherish their infatuations, and practice their knavery, to the very last. Their number, in places which enjoy the pure gospel, the only ones in our present view, is too small to make any perceptible difference in the amount; or to disparage that respectful credence with which the rustic and the sage listen to the testimony of a dying bed.

By this testimony the "gospel of the grace of God," has obtained, among every people and in every age, such strong confirmation, and has carried into the human conscience, such irresistible appeals for its truth, its power, and its glorious excellency, that its enemies have labored with all their might to discredit these triumphs. They have attacked the principle upon which the testimony of a dying believer rests. They have said that the mind, being necessarily enfeebled by the ravages of mortal disease upon the body, is not a competent judge of its own operations—that the

looks, the tears, the whole conduct of surrounding friends, excite artificial emotions in the dying—that superstition has a prodigious ascendancy over their imagination—that their joyful impressions of heaven are the mere reveries of a disturbed brain—that their serenity, their steady hope, their placid faith, are only the natural consequence of long habit, which never operates more freely than when the faculty of reflection is impaired. All this, and more like this, do unhappy mortals who take or pretend to take, pleasure in putting an extinguisher upon the light of life, detail with an air of superiority, as if they had fallen upon a discovery which merits the plaudits of the world. But were it even so—were the Christian victory over death only a dream, it is a dream so sweet and blessed, that with the scourger of Lord Bolingbroke's philosophy, I should "account that man a villain that awoke me—awoke me to truth and misery."* But I am not going to discuss this question. The poor infidel does not believe himself, and why should others believe him? With one breath he endeavors to cry down the argument to be derived in favor of their religion, from the peaceful death of Christians; and with the next to enlist it in his own service. He omits no opportunity of celebrating the intrepidity or composure

* Hunter's view of the philosophical character and writings of Lord Viscount Bolingbroke.

displayed by sceptical brethren in their last moments. Let the letter of Dr. Adam Smith, concerning the death of David Hume, Esq., be a proof. Every sentence betrays his anxiety to set off his friend to the best advantage. The dullest observer cannot but perceive his design, to compare Mr. Hume dying an infidel, with a Christian dying in the faith of Jesus. Let us draw out, at length, that comparison which he has only insinuated; and that the effect may be more decisive, let us remember that the whole annals of unbelief do not furnish a more favorable example than he has selected. Mr. Hume was a man of undisputed genius. His versatile talent, his intense application, his large acquirements, and his uncommon acuteness, place him, perhaps, at the head of those enemies of revelation who attempt to *reason*; as Voltaire stands without a rival among those who only *scoff*. He had, besides, what rarely belongs to the ascertained infidel, a good moral reputation. We mean, that he was not addicted to lewdness, to drunkenness, to knavery, to profane swearing,* or any of those grosser vices which are

* On further recollection. we are compelled to deduct from Mr. Hume's morality, his freedom from profane swearing. For, in an account of the life and writings of the Rev. Dr. Robertson, the great historian, drawn up by Professor Dugald Stewart, there is a letter from Mr. Hume to the doctor, in which he descends to the coarse and vulgar profanity of the ale-house, and the main-deck. To ask his *reverend* correspondent, the principal of the University of Edin-

the natural and ordinary companions of enmity to the gospel. For otherwise, as he labored to unsettle all fixed principles of belief, to overturn the whole system of moral obligation; to obliterate a sense of God's authority from the conscience; and

burgh; the ecclesiastical premier of the church of Scotland, "What the devil he had to do with that old-fashioned, dangling word, *where-with?*" and to tell him, "I will see you d——d sooner," viz. than "swallow your *hath*."*—are such gross violations of decency, that unless Mr. Hume had been *accustomed* to adorn his speech with similar expletives, they never could have found their way into a familiar letter; much less into a letter designed for the eye of a man to whom, considering his *profession* only, they were a direct insult. We do not wonder that Mr. Stuart should "hesitate about the propriety of subjecting to the criticisms of the world so careless an effusion." But, knowing as we do, the urbanity of that gentleman's manners, the elegance of his mind, and his high sense of decorum, we much wonder that his hesitation had not a different issue. We fear that all men of sobriety, we are sure that all men of religion, will refuse to accept Mr. Hume's "gaiety and affection," as an apology for his vileness; or to let it pass off under the mask of "playful and good-natured irony." If a philosopher's "affection" must vent itself in ribaldry, if he cannot be "playful and good-natured," without plundering the waterman and scavenger of their appropriate phraseology, we own that his conversation has no attractions for us. Such a "glimpse" as this letter affords, of the "writer and his correspondent in the habits of private intercourse," is far from "suggesting not unpleasing pictures of the hours which they borrowed from business and study." But the most melancholy reflection is, that such intimacies and correspondences furnish an index of Dr. Robertson's own character. The infidels never allowed that he had anything of the Christian minister but his canonicals and his sermons. With these exceptions they claimed him as their own, and their claim appears to have been too well founded.

* An account of the Life and Writings of William Robertson, D. D., prefixed to his works, pp. 80, 81.

positively to inculcate the innocence of the greatest crimes, he must be accounted one of the most flagitiously immoral men that ever lived.

His panegyrist, too, was a man of superior parts and profound erudition. The name of *Adam Smith* will always rank high in the republic of letters, and will never be pronounced but with respect by the political economist. Mr. Hume can have lost nothing, has possibly gained much, by the pen of his friend. Taking him, therefore, as the letter to Mr. Strahan represents him, let us contrast him with that servant of the Lord Jesus Christ, *Dr. Samuel Finley*.

Whatever be a man's opinions, one of his most rational occupations in the prospect of leaving the world is to look back upon the manner in which he has passed through it, to compare his duties with his conduct, and to inquire how far he deserves the approbation or the reproach of his own conscience. With a Christian, this admits not of dispute. Nor will it be disputed by a Deist, who professes his faith in the being and providence of God, and a state of rewards and punishments hereafter proportioned to the degree of crime or of virtue here. To such a one it is, upon his own principles, a question of unspeakable importance, whether he shall commence his future existence with hopes of happiness or with fears of misery; especially as he relies much upon the efficacy of

penitence and prayer in procuring forgiveness of his faults, indulgence to his infirmities, and a general mitigation of whatever is unfavorable. Nay, the mortal Deist, or the Atheist himself, for they are not worth the trouble of a distinction, ought, for their own sakes in this life, to be so employed. If with the rejection of all religious constraint, they have not also uprooted every affection of their nature, nothing could afford them more gratification in the evening of their days than the consciousness of their having contributed something to the mass of human comfort. In short, whether we argue upon Christian or unchristian grounds, it can be the interest of none but the worthless and the malignant to shut their eyes upon their own history, and sink down in death as a bullock drops under the knife of his executioner.

Yet strange as it may appear, and inconsistent as it certainly is with his high pretensions, there are few things so rare as a dying infidel taking a deliberate retrospect of life. We say a *deliberat retrospect*; for it is undeniable, that on many of those, who, like the apostate Julian, waged implacable war with the Galilean, conscience, recovering from its slumbers, has at the hour of death, or the apprehension of it, forced an unwilling and tormenting recollection of their deeds. The point of honor in their philosophy seems to be, and their utmost attainment is, to keep completely out of

view both the past and the future. This was evidently the case with Mr. Hume. Read over again Dr. Smith's letter to Mr. Strahan, and you will not find a syllable from which you could gather that there is an hereafter, a providence, or a God—not a sentence to indicate that Mr. Hume believed he had ever committed a sin, or was in any respect an accountable being.

Turn now away from the philosopher, and hear what a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ has to say. Melting into gratitude for that mercy which he had received from his heavenly Father, he goes back to the commencement of his Christian course and desires his friend to pray that God "would be pleased to let him feel just as he did at that time when he first closed with Christ," and the rapture of his soul came near to the blessedness of heaven. With deep humility he owns his sinfulness; not a whisper of extenuation or apology does he utter—"I know not in what language to speak of my own unworthiness—I have been undutiful." But with great tenderness, as in the presence of the Omniscient, he attests his satisfaction with time spent in his Christian duties and enjoyments. "I can truly say, that I have loved the service of God—I have honestly endeavored to act for God, but with much weakness and corruption—I have tried my Master's yoke, and will never shrink my neck from it." That he had been useful to others and instrumental

in their salvation, was to him a source of pure and elevated joy. "The Lord has given me many souls as a crown of my rejoicing."

What think you, now, reader, of Mr. Hume and Dr. Finley, with regard to their retrospect of life? Who evinces most of the good and the virtuous man? Whose reflections, is it reasonable to conclude, were the most delightful? *His*, who let none of them escape his lips? or *his*, whose words were inadequate to express their abundance or their sweetness? No; the one had not delightful recollections to communicate. High happiness is never selfish. The overflowing heart pours off its exuberance into the bosom of a friend. And had Mr. H. had anything of this sort to impart, his companions and encomiasts would have shared in his pleasure, and would not have forgotten to tell the world of its luxury. Their silence is a sufficient comment.

Let us extend our comparison to a particular, which, more than almost anything else, touches the pride of philosophy; we mean the *dignity* displayed by the infidel and by the Christian respectively.

Ask Dr. Smith. He will tell you that at the very time when he knew his dissolution was near, Mr. Hume continued to "divert himself as usual, with correcting his own works for a new edition; with reading books of amusement; with the con-

versation of his friends; and sometimes, in the evening, with a party at his favorite game of whist." Behold the dying occupation of a captain of infidelity! Of one who is eulogized "as approaching as nearly to the idea of a perfectly wise and virtuous man, as perhaps the nature of human frailty will admit"—his most serious employment is "diverting himself." Just about to yield up his last breath, and "diverting himself!" *From* what? Let them answer who know that there are apt to be troublesome visitors to the imagination and the conscience of one who has prostituted his powers to the purpose of spreading rebellion against the God who made him! "Diverting himself!" *With* what? With correcting his *own works* for a new edition! a considerable portion of which "works" is destined to prove that justice, mercy, faith, and all the circle of both the duties and charities, are obligatory only because they are useful; and, by consequence, that their opposites shall be obligatory when they shall appear to be more useful—that the religion of the Lord Jesus, which has "brought life and immortality to light," is an imposture—that adultery is a bagatelle, and suicide a virtue! *With* what? With reading books of *amusement*. The adventures of Don Quixote; the tales of the genii; a novel, a tragedy, a farce, a collection of sonnets; anything but those sober and searching treatises which are fit for one who "con-

siders his latter end." *With what? With what?* With the conversation of his friends, such as Dr. Smith, and Dr. Black, another famous infidel, who, as they had nothing inviting to discuss about futurity, and Mr. Hume could not bear the fatigue of abstruse speculation, must have entertained him with all that jejune small talk which makes great wits look so very contemptible when they have nothing to say. *With what?* With an evening party at his favorite game of whist! A card-table! and all that nauseous gabble for which the card-table is renowned! The question is to be decided, whether such stupendous faculties as had been lavished upon Mr. Hume were to be blasted into annihilation; or expanded to the vision and fruition of the INFINITE GOOD; or converted into inlets of endless pain, despair, and horror? A question which might convulse the abyss, and move the thrones of heaven—and while the decision is preparing, preparing for *him*, Mr. H. sits down to a gaming-board, with gambling companions, to be "diverted" with the chances of the cards and the edifying conversation to which they give rise! Such is the *dignity* of this almost "perfectly wise and virtuous man!" Such a *philosopher's* preparation for death!

Let us leave him at the card-table, and pay a second visit to Dr. Finley. From his gracious lips not a trifling word escapes. In his ardent soul,

now ready to speed its flight to the spirits of the just, there is no room for "diversion," for "correcting" compositions, for "books of amusement," or for "games of whist." The everlasting life of those around him—the spiritual prosperity of a congregation dear to him—the interests of his Redeemer among the nations—these, these are the themes which fill his thoughts and dwell upon his tongue. "Oh that each of you," says he to the spectators of his pain, "may experience what, blessed be God, I do, when ye come to die." "Give my love to the people of Princeton; tell them that I am going to die, and that I am not afraid of death. The Lord Jesus take care of his cause in the world."

The manner in which Mr. H. and Dr. F. directly contemplated death, and the effects of death, presents another strong point of contrast.

It is evident from the whole of Dr. Smith's narrative, that the former confined or wished to confine his view to the mere *physical* event—to the bodily anguish which it might create, and its putting a period to earthly enjoyments. The whole of the philosopher's "magnanimity" centres here. Allowing to his composure under these views of death as much as can reasonably be demanded, we do not perceive in it *all* that "magnanimity" which is perceived by Dr. S. Thousands, who had no pretensions to philosophical pre-eminence, have

been Mr. H.'s equals on this ground. If he had succeeded in persuading himself, as his writings tend to persuade others, that the spirit of man, like the spirit of a beast, "goeth downwards;" that when the breath should leave his body, there would be an end of Mr. Hume; that the only change would be, to "turn a few ounces of blood into a different channel"—to vary the form of a cluster of corpuscles, or to scatter a bundle of perceptions up and down through that huge collection of impressions and ideas, that stupendous mass of *nothings* of which his philosophy had sagaciously discovered the whole material and intellectual world to be composed—if *this* were all, we cannot discern in what his magnanimity consisted. It is chiefly as a *moral* event that death is interesting—as an event which, instead of putting an end to our existence, only introduces us to a mode of existence, as much more interesting than the present as eternity is more interesting than time.

It is this view that chiefly engaged the attention of Dr. Finley. In common with others he was to undergo the pains of dissolution. But he rested not in these. He fixed his eye upon that new form which all his relations to God, to holiness, to sin, and the inhabitants of the future world, were shortly to assume. The reader, we doubt not, perceives the immense disparity between these cases. Mr. H. looks at death as it affects the

affairs of this world. Dr. F. as it involves eternal issues. Mr. H., according to his own notions, had nothing to encounter but the struggles of nature, and nothing to lose but a few temporal enjoyments. Before Dr. F. was the tribunal of God, and the stake at hazard was an immortal soul. An error here is irretrievable; the very thought of its possibility is enough to shake every fibre of the frame; and proportionably precious and certain must be that religion which can assure the believer of his safety, and convey him with peacefulness and pleasure to his Father's house.

This being the case, let us weigh the consolations of the philosopher against those of the Christian.

Dr. Smith has made the most of them in behalf of the former, but a very little scrutiny will show that they are light and meagre indeed. "I am dying," they are the words of Mr. H., "as easily and cheerfully as my best friends could desire." "When he became very weak," says Dr. Black, "it cost him an effort to speak; and he died in such a happy composure of mind, that nothing could exceed it."

We are not without suspicion, that on the part of Mr. H. there is some affectation here; and on the part of his friends, some pretty high coloring. In the mouth of a Christian, "composure," "cheerfulness," "complacency," "resignation," "happi-

ness," in death, have an exquisite meaning. But what meaning *can* they have in the mouth of one, the very best of whose expectations is the extinction of his being? Is there any "complacency" in the thought of perishing? any "happiness" in the dreary and dismal anticipation of being blotted out of life? It is a farce; it is a mockery of every human feeling; and every throbbing of the heart convicts it of a lie. But Mr. Hume expected a better state of existence—nay, talk not of that. There is not, either in his own expressions or those of his friends, the faintest allusion to futurity. That glorious light, which shines through the grave upon the redeemed of the Lord, was the object of his derision. No comfort from this quarter. The accomplishment of his earthly wishes and the prosperity of his near relatives, are the only reasons assigned for his cheerfulness. But these are insufficient. In thousands and ten thousands they have not availed to preclude the most alarming forebodings; and why should they do more for Mr. Hume?

In the next place, how shall we interpret his "resignation?" Resignation to what? To the Divine Will? O no! God was not in all his thoughts. But death was at hand, and he could not escape; he submitted to a stroke which it was impossible to avoid. And all that is said of his "composure," and "cheerfulness," and "resigna-

tion," and "complacency," when measured by the scale of truth, amounts to no more than a sottish unconcern set off with a fictitious gaiety. It is easy to work up a fine description, and it is often most fine when most remote from the fact. Let any infidel between the poles produce, if he can, a reason that shall satisfy a child why one, who has lived without God, should find "complacency" in death. Nothing but that "hope which maketh not ashamed" is a cause equal to such an effect. But "hope" beyond the grave is a word which had no place in Mr. Hume's vocabulary, because the thing had no place in his soul. It is plain, however, that he

Felt his ruling passion strong in death.

Whatever his decay had weakened, his desire to see "the downfall of some of the prevailing systems of superstition," which with Mr. Hume meant neither more nor less than the destruction of Christianity, in every modification, retained its whole vigor. And thus, while venting his spite at the only "system" which ever could render death comfortable, he goes to Lucien's dialogues, and edifies his friends with chattering nonsense about Charon and his boat! *O cæcas hominum mentes!* Nothing can be more blind and infatuated than the fanaticism of philosophy "falsely so called." With this puerile levity before our eyes, and this

contemptible babbling sounding in our ears, we must listen to tales of Mr. Hume's magnanimity, complacency, and resignation!

From a barren exhibition of atheism, let us repair once more to the servant of God. In Dr. Finley we see a man dying, not only with cheerfulness, but with ecstasy. Of his friends, his wife, his children, he takes a *joyful* leave; committing all that he held most dear in this world, not to the uncertainties of earthly fortune, but to the "promises of his God." Although his temporal circumstances were very moderate; although he *had* sons and daughters to provide for, and slender means of doing it, he felt not a moment's uneasiness—*Leave thy fatherless children with me; I will preserve them alive; and let thy widows trust in me,* was, in his estimation, a better security for their support than any inheritance in lands or lucre. And as to death itself—who but one "filled with hopes full of immortality" could use such language as this—"A Christian's death is the best part of his existence"—"Blessed be God! eternal rest is at hand." "O I shall triumph over every foe," (he meant sin, Satan, death, the grave,) "the Lord hath given me the victory—I exult; I triumph! Now I know that it is *impossible* that faith should not triumph over earth and hell"—"Lord Jesus, into thy hands I commit my spirit; I do it with *confidence*; I do it with *full assurance*. I know

that thou wilt keep that which I have committed unto thee?" We appeal to all the world, whether anything like this, anything that deserves so much as to be named in comparison, ever fell from the lips of an infidel. How poor, how mean, how miserable, does he look, when brought to the contrast! Let the reader review again the situation of Dr. Finley, ponder his words, and mark their spirit; and then let him go back to Mr. Hume's "diversion"—to his correcting his atheistical writings for a new edition—to his "books of amusement"—to his "game of whist"—to his insipid raillery about Charon and his boat! Truly the infidels have cause to look big, and despise the followers of Jesus Christ! "Pray sir," said a young man to the late Dr. Black, in the presence of a juvenile company at the Dr.'s own table, "Pray, sir, how did Mr. Hume die?" "Mr. Hume," answered the sceptical chemist, with an air of great significance, "Mr. Hume died as he lived, a *philosopher*." Dr. Black himself has aided Dr. Smith in telling us what the death of a *philosopher* is. It has taught us, if nothing before did, that the pathetic exclamation, "Let my soul be with the philosophers," belongs to one who is a stranger to truth and happiness. If they resemble Mr. Hume, we will most devoutly exclaim, "Furthest from them is best." Let *our* souls be with the Christians! with the humble believers in that

Jesus who is "the resurrection and the life." Let them be with *Samuel Finley*; let them not be with *David Hume*!

We cannot close these strictures without again reminding the reader, that no instance of composure in death is to be found more favorable to the infidel boast than the instance of Mr. Hume. And yet, how jejune and forlorn does he appear in comparison of Dr. Finley. The latter *longs* for his departure, "as the hireling pants for the evening shade;" and when it comes, he pours around him his kindly benedictions; his eye beams with celestial brilliancy; he shouts, Salvation! and is away to "the bosom of his Father and his God."

But in the other all is blank. No joy sparkles in his eye; no hope swells his bosom; an unmeaning smile is on his countenance, and frigid ridicule dishonors his lips. Be it never forgotten, that *no infidels die in triumph*! The utmost to which they pretend is dying with calmness. Even this rarely happens; and, the scripture being judge, it is a part of their accursedness. It imparts the deepest horror to the *surprise* of the eternal world. But, if you reverse the picture, and ask how many infidels close their career in anguish, in distraction, in a *fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation which shall devour the ADVERSARIES*? how endless is the train of wretches, how piercing their cry! That arch-blasphemer, Voltaire, left

the world with hell anticipated; and we hear so frequently of his disciples "going to their own place" in a similar manner, that the dreadful narratives lose their effect by repetition. It was quite recently that a youth in the state of New York, who had been debauched by the ribaldrous impiety of Paine, yielded up the ghost with dire imprecations on the hour when he first saw an infidel book, and on the murderer who first put it into his hand. But who ever heard of a dying man's cursing the day in which he believed in Jesus? While such an instance, we are bold to assert, never occurred, nothing is more common than the peaceful death of them who have "tasted that the Lord is gracious." They who see *practical* Christianity in those retreats which the eye of a profane philosopher seldom penetrates, could easily fill a long record of dying beds softened with that bland submission, and cheered with that victorious hope, which threw so heavenly a lustre round the bed of Dr. Finley.

These things carry with them their own recommendation to the conscience, which is not yet "seared as with a hot iron." If our pages fall into the hands of the young, we affectionately entreat them to "remember their Creator in the days of *their youth*;" "to make their calling and their election sure," before they be "hardened by the deceitfulness of sin." Rich are the tints of that

beauty, and sweet the fragrance of those blossoms, on which, in the morning of life, the Lord our God sheds down the dews of his blessing. You would not wish to be associuted with infidels in their death ; shun the contagion of their principles while you are in spirits and in health. Your hearts cannot but sigh, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his." Cast in, then, your lot with him ; choose for your own God the God of Samuel Finley ; and like him, you shall have "hope in your death ;" like him, you shall be had in everlasting remembrance," when "the memory of the wicked shall rot."

CONVERSATION
WITH A
YOUNG TRAVELER.

CONVERSATION

WITH A

Y O U N G T R A V E L E R .

EVERY one has remarked the mixed, and often ill-assorted company, which meets in a public packet or stage-coach. The conversation, with all its variety, is commonly insipid, frequently disgusting, and sometimes insufferable. There are exceptions. An opportunity now and then occurs of spending an hour in a manner not unworthy of rational beings; and the incidents of a stage-coach produce or promote salutary impressions.

A few years ago, one of the stages which ply between our two principal cities, was filled with a group which could never have been drawn together by mutual choice. In the company was a young man of social temper, affable manners, and considerable information. His accent was barely sufficient to show that the English was not his native tongue, and a very slight peculiarity in the

pronunciation of the *th* ascertained him to be a Hollander. He had early entered into military life; had borne both a Dutch and French commission, had seen real service, had traveled, was master of the English language; and evinced, by his deportment, that he was no stranger to the society of gentlemen. He had, however, in a very high degree, a fault too common among military men, and too absurd to find an advocate among men of sense: he swore profanely and incessantly.

While the horses were changing, a gentleman who sat on the same seat with him, took him by the arm, and requested the favor of his company in a short walk. When they were so far retired as not to be overheard, the former observed, "Although I have not the honor of your acquaintance, I perceive, sir, that your habits and feelings are those of a gentleman, and that nothing can be more repugnant to your wishes, than giving unnecessary pain to any of your company." He started and replied, "Most certainly, sir! I hope I have committed no offence of that sort."

"You will pardon me," replied the other, "for pointing out an instance in which you have not altogether avoided it."

"Sir," said he, "I shall be much your debtor for so friendly an act: for, upon my honor, I cannot conjecture in what I have transgressed."

"If you, sir," continued the former, "had a very dear friend to whom you were under unspeakable obligations, should you not be deeply wounded by any disrespect to him, or even by hearing his name introduced and used with a frequency of repetition and a levity of air incompatible with the regard due to his character?"

"Undoubtedly; and I should not permit it! But I know not that I am chargeable with indecorum to any of your friends."

"Sir, my God is my best friend, to whom I am under infinite obligations. I think you must recollect that you have very frequently, since we commenced our journey, taken his name in vain. *This* has given to me, and to others of the company, excruciating pain."

"Sir," answered he, with very ingenuous emphasis, "I *have* done wrong. I confess the impropriety. I am ashamed of a practice which I am sensible has no excuse; but I have imperceptibly fallen into it, and I really swear without being conscious that I do so. I will endeavor to abstain from it in future; and as you are next me in the seat, I shall thank you to touch my elbow as often as I trespass." This was agreed upon: the horn sounded, and the travelers resumed their places.

In the space of four or five miles the officer's elbow was jogged every few seconds. He always colored, but bowed, and received the hint without

the least symptom of displeasure; and in a few miles more so mastered his propensity to swearing, that not an oath was heard from his lips for the rest, which was the greater part of the journey.

He was evidently more grave; and having ruminated some time, after surveying first one and then another of the company, turned to his admonisher and addressed him thus:

“You are a clergyman, I presume, sir.”

“I am considered as such.” He paused; and then, with a smile, indicated his disbelief in divine revelation, in a way which invited conversation on that subject.

“I have never been able to convince myself of the truth of revelation.”

“Possibly not. But what is your difficulty?”

“I dislike the *nature of its proofs*. They are so subtle, so distant, so wrapt in mystery, so metaphysical, that I get lost, and can arrive at no certain conclusion.”

“I cannot admit the fact to be as you represent it. My impressions are altogether different. Nothing seems to me more plain and popular; more level to every common understanding; more remote from all cloudy speculation, or teasing subtleties, than some of the principal proofs of divine revelation. They are drawn from great and incontestible facts; they are accumulating every hour. They have grown into such a mass of evidence, that the

supposition of its falsehood is infinitely more incredible than any one mystery in the volumes of revelation, or even than all their mysteries put together. Your inquiries, sir, appear to have been unhappily directed—but what *sort* of proof do you desire, and what would satisfy you?”

“Such proofs as accompany physical science. This I have always loved; for I never find it deceive me. I rest upon it with entire conviction. There is no mistake, and can be no dispute in mathematics. And if a revelation comes from God, why have we not such evidence for it as mathematical demonstration?”

“Sir, you are too good a philosopher not to know that the nature of evidence must be adapted to the nature of its object; that if you break in upon this adaptation, you will have no evidence at all; seeing that evidence is no more interchangeable than objects. If you ask for mathematical evidence, you must confine yourself to mathematical disquisitions. Your subject must be *quantity*. If you wish to pursue a moral investigation, you must quit your mathematics, and confine yourself to moral evidence. Your subject must be the *relations which subsist between intelligent beings*. It would be quite as wise to apply a rule in ethics to the calculation of an eclipse, as to call for Euclid when we want to know our duty, or to submit the question, “whether God has spoken,”

to the test of a problem in the conic sections. How would you prove mathematically that bread nourishes men, and that fevers kill them? Yet you and I both are as firmly convinced of the truth of these propositions, as of any mathematical demonstration whatever, and should I call them in question, my neighbors would either pity me as an idiot, or shut me up as a madman. It is, therefore, a great mistake to suppose that there is no satisfactory nor certain evidence but what is reducible to mathematics."

This train of reflection appeared new to him. For, however obvious it is, we must remember, that nothing is more superficial than freethinking philosophy, and nothing more credulous than its unbelief. Dogmatical positions, asserted with confidence, set off with small ridicule, and favorable to native depravity, have a prodigious effect upon the volatile youth; and persuade him that they have enlightened his understanding, when they have only flattered his vanity, or corrupted his heart.

The officer, though staggered, made an effort to maintain his ground, and lamented that the "objections to other modes of reasoning are numerous and perplexing, while the mathematical conclusion puts all scepticism at defiance."

"Sir," rejoined the clergyman, "objections against a thing fairly proved, are of no weight. The proof

rests upon our knowledge, and the objections upon our ignorance. It is true, that moral demonstrations and religious doctrines may be attacked in a very ingenious and plausible manner, because they involve questions on which our ignorance is greater than our knowledge; but still our knowledge is knowledge; or, in other words, our certainty is certainty. In mathematical reasoning, our knowledge is greater than our ignorance. When you have proved that *the three angles of every triangle are equal to two right angles*, there is an end of doubt; because there are no materials for ignorance to work up into phantoms; but your knowledge is really no more certain than your knowledge on any other subject.

“There is also a deception in this matter. The defect complained of is supposed to exist in the *nature of the proof*; whereas it exists, for the most part, in the *mind of the inquirer*. It is impossible to tell how far the influence of human depravity obscures the light of human reason.”

At the mention of “depravity,” the officer smiled, and seemed inclined to jest; probably suspecting, as is common with men of that class, that his antagonist was going to retreat into his creed, and intrench himself behind a technical term, instead of an argument. The triumph was premature.

“You do not imagine, sir,” said he, continuing

his discourse to the officer, "you do not imagine that a man who has been long addicted to stealing, feels the force of reasoning against theft as strongly as a man of tried honesty. If you hesitate, proceed a step further. You do not imagine that an habitual thief feels as much abhorrence of his own trade and character, as a man who never committed an act of theft in his whole life. And you will not deny that the practice of *any* crime gradually weakens, and frequently destroys, the sense of its turpitude. This is a strong *fact*, which, as a philosopher you are bound to explain. To me it is clear as the day, that his vice has debauched his intellect: for it is indisputable, that the considerations which *once* filled him with horror, produce *now* no more impression upon him than they would produce upon a horse. Why? Has the vice changed? Have the considerations changed? No. The vice is as pernicious and the considerations are as strong as ever. But his power of perceiving truth is diminished; and diminished by his vice; for, had he not fallen into it, the considerations would have retained, and (should he be saved from it) they would resume their original force upon his mind. Permit yourself, for one moment, to reflect how hard it is to persuade men of the virtues of others against whom they are prejudiced! You shall bring no proof of the virtues which the prejudice shall not resist or

evade. Remove the prejudice, and the proof appears invincible. Why? Have the virtues changed? has the proof been strengthened? No. But the power of perceiving truth is increased; or, which is the same thing, the impediment to perceiving it is taken away. If, then, there are bad passions among men; and if the object of divine revelation is to control and rectify them; it follows, that a man to whom the revelation is proposed, will be blind to its evidence, in exact proportion to the perverting influence of those passions. And were the human mind free from corruption, there is no reason whatever to think that a moral argument would not be as conclusive as a mathematical argument is now; and that the principles of moral and religious science, would not command an assent as instantaneous and peremptory as that which is commanded by mathematical axioms."

After a short pause, in which no reply was made by the officer, and the looks of the company revealed their sentiments, the clergyman proceeded:

"But what will you say, sir, should I endeavor to turn the tables upon you, by showing that the evidence of your physical science is not without its difficulties; and that objections can be urged against mathematical demonstration more puzzling and unanswerable than any objections against moral evidence?"

“I shall yield the cause; but I am sure that the condition is impossible.”

“Let us try,” said the other.

“I begin with a common case. The Newtonian system of the world is so perfectly settled, that no scholar presumes to question it. Go, then, to a peasant who never heard of Newton, nor Copernicus, nor the solar system; and tell him that the earth moves round its axis, and round the sun. He will stare at you, to see whether you be not jeering him; and when he sees you are in earnest, he will laugh at you for a fool. Ply him, now, with your mathematical and astronomical reasoning. He will answer you, that he believes his own eyesight more than your learning; and his eyesight tells him the sun moves round the earth. And as for the earth’s turning round upon her axis, he will say, that ‘he has often hung a kettle over the kitchen fire at night, and when he came back in the morning it was hanging there still; but, had the earth turned round, the kettle would have been turned over, and the mash spilled over the floor.’ You are amused with the peasant’s simplicity, but you cannot convince him. His objection is, in his own eyes, insurmountable: he will tell the affair to his neighbors as a good story; and they will agree that he fairly shut the philosopher’s mouth. You may reply, that ‘the peasant was introduced into the middle of a matured science, and that, not

having learned its elements, he was unsupplied with the principles of correct judgment.' True; but your solution has overthrown yourself. A free-thinker, when he hears some great doctrine of Christianity, lets off a small objection, and runs away laughing at the folly, or railing at the imposture of all who venture to defend a divine revelation; he gathers his brother unbelievers, and they unite with him in wondering at the weakness or the impudence of Christians. He is in the very situation of the peasant. He bolts into the heart of a grand religious system; he has never adverted to its first principles, and then he complains that the evidence is bad. But the fault in neither case lies in the evidence: it lies in the ignorance or obstinacy of the objector. The peasant's ground is as firm as the infidel's. The proof of the Newtonian system is to the former as distant, subtle, and cloudy, as the proof of revelation can be to the latter; and the objection of the one, as good as the objection of the other. If the depravity of men had as much interest in persuading them that the earth is not globular, and does not move round the sun, as it has in persuading them that the Bible is not true, a mathematical demonstration would fail of converting them, although the demonstrator were an angel of God!

“But with respect to the other point, viz. that there are objections to mathematical evidence

more puzzling and unanswerable than can be alleged against moral reasoning, take the two following instances:

“It is mathematically demonstrated that matter is *infinitely divisible*: that is, has an *infinite number of parts*: a line, then, of half an inch long, has an infinite number of parts. Who does not see the absurdity of an *infinite half-inch*. Try the difficulty another way. It requires *some* portion of time to pass any portion of space. Then as your half-inch has an infinite number of parts, it requires an infinite number of portions of time for a moving point to pass by the infinite number of parts: but an infinite number of portions of time, is an eternity! Consequently it requires an eternity, or something like it, to move *half an inch*!”

“But, sir,” interposed the officer, “you do not deny the accuracy of the demonstration, that matter is infinitely divisible!” “Not in the least, sir; I perceive no flaw in the chain of demonstration, and yet I perceive the result to be infinitely absurd.

“Again, it is mathematically demonstrated that a straight line, called the *asymptote* of the hyperbola, may *eternally approach* the curve of the hyperbola, and yet can never *meet it*. Now, as all demonstrations are built upon axioms, an axiom must always be plainer than a demonstration: and to my judgment it is as plain, that, if two lines

continually approach, they shall meet, as that the whole is greater than its part. Here, therefore, I am fixed. I have a demonstration directly in the teeth of an axiom, and am equally incapable of denying either side of the contradiction."

"Sir," exclaimed the officer, clapping his hands together, "I own I am beat, completely beat: I have nothing more to say."

A silence of some minutes succeeded; when the young military traveler said to his theological friend, "I have studied *all* religions, and have not been able to satisfy myself."

"No, sir," answered he, "there is *one* religion which you have not yet studied."

"Pray, sir," cried the officer, roused and eager, "what is *that*?"

"The religion," replied the other, "of *salvation through the redemption of the Son of God*: the religion which will sweeten your pleasures and soften your sorrows; which will give peace to your conscience and joy to your heart; which will bear you up under the pressure of evils here, and shed the light of immortality on the gloom of the grave. *This* religion, I believe, sir, you have yet to study."

The officer put his hands upon his face; then languidly clasping them, let them fall down; forced a smile, and said, with a sigh, "We must all follow what we think best." His behavior afterward was

perfectly decorous. Nothing further is known of him.

NOTE. The individual by whom the "Conversation with a Young Traveler" was held, was the Rev. Dr. JOHN MASON, the father of the author, the first pastor of the Scotch Presbyterian Church, in the city of New York.

A considerable time after it occurred, a knock was heard at the door of Dr. M. at a very early hour, and a note addressed to him was handed in, accompanied by a handsome *Beaver Hat*. The note was from the "*Young Traveler*," and its purport to "remind Dr. M. of the circumstances under which he had once met with him; to inform him that, in consequence of what he had then heard, he had been induced to study *the religion of Jesus*; that his investigation had resulted in an entire conviction of the divine origin of that religion; and that, by the blessing of God, his remarks had been, as he hoped, made instrumental to the salvation of his soul."

He further added, "that he had recently received orders to return to Europe; had arrived in the city late on the preceding evening, and was about to sail that morning; that he should not have time to call on Dr. M., but begged him to accept the assurance of his affectionate regard; that in all human probability he should never see him on earth, but he indulged what he trusted was a well founded hope, that they should spend a happy eternity together."

"A WORD SPOKEN IN SEASON, HOW GOOD IS IT."

THE

A D D R E S S

OF THE

NEW YORK MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

1796.

A D D R E S S
OF THE
NEW YORK MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

1796.

*To all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in
sincerity.*

VERY DEAR BRETHREN,—Events have recently occurred which deeply interest every genuine Christian. We learn, from sources the most direct and authentic, that exertions of uncommon vigor are now making beyond the Atlantic, for extending the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. A spirit of jealousy for his name, not less decisive than universal, actuates our brethren in Britain. Its influence was first felt by the faithful around the metropolis; and the impulse hath vibrated to the extremes of the isle. While their nation is involved in the destructive war which convulses Europe, they are devoted to the advancement of

that kingdom which is righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Large societies, founded on evangelical principles, and embracing various denominations, have already been formed, and are rapidly forming, for the purpose of propagating the gospel among the unhappy heathen. With a magnanimity worthy of Christians, they have sacrificed the bigotries of party on the altar of Apostolic zeal. To the east, to the south, to the west, their ardent eye directs its attention. Unwilling to restrict their efforts to their own immediate connections, it is their noble design to produce, if possible, "a general movement of the church upon earth." It was their generous piety which gave rise to the NEW YORK MISSIONARY SOCIETY. It is to solicit your co-operation in the same glorious work, that the Society now addresses you; and surely, brethren, there are considerations which should prompt us to follow, without delay, their great example. That in Messiah "all the families in the earth shall be blessed," is yet the subject of promise. True it is, that the effects which resulted from his "appearing to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself," were a pledge of its final and illustrious accomplishment. When he ascended up on high, the wall of partition between the Gentile and the Jew was broken down; the river of life poured its streams among the nations; they watered the lot of our

pagan progenitors ; they have descended unto us, their children ; and we, at this hour, verify the gracious predictions, "*it shall come to pass that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God.*" But although splendid accessions have been made to the Church of Christ, there is room for accessions yet more splendid. Though *we* enjoy the clearest light of his gospel, there are millions of our race on whom it never shone. There are hundreds of millions who never tasted his salvation, nor heard of his name. Of these vast numbers are in our own land. They are without God, and without hope ; destitute of the means of grace, and even insensible to their misery. Age after age hath elapsed, and they still sit in the region and shadow of death. Besides these, there are, on our frontiers, multitudes whose situation, notwithstanding occasional aid, entitles them to our deepest commiseration. Without the stated preaching of the Word—without the ordinances of the Gospel—without sanctified Sabbaths or religious instruction—many of them, though called Christians, are heathen in reality. If their helpless state should excite our sympathy, the duty of attempting their relief is too plain to be evaded, and is recommended by motives the most tender and forceful. The souls of these poor pagans, and of others in circumstances not less afflicting, are

as valuable as our own; they are as capable as ourselves of glorifying God, and of being glorified with him. They will be as bright ornaments, if saved, in the crown of *Jesus*; and, if lost, as certain heirs of the wrath to come.

In their forlorn condition, we see an affecting picture of what we ourselves once were. We, too, have sprung from an infidel stock. *We, too, were "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise:"* and such we would have been at this day, had not some disciples, to whom we are everlasting debtors—men "*full of faith and of the Holy Ghost*"—put their lives in their hands, and preached to our fathers the gospel of salvation. They felt the authority of the command which enjoins the church to evangelize the nations; and that command, in all its solemnity, is binding upon us. Freely we have received, freely we must give. The least acknowledgment which the loving kindness of God our Saviour can require at our hands, is, "*to take the cup of salvation,*" to drink deeply for ourselves, and communicate of it to others. And yet, what have we done towards rescuing the heathen from their ignorance, and from their delusions? We have prayed, indeed; we are in the habit of praying that the kingdom of our Lord Jesus may come. But what means have we used for attaining the blessing? Where are the monuments of

our zeal, of our boldness, of our fortitude, of our patience? The zeal of others who have preceded us, is a striking reproof to our lukewarmness. The labors of the Mayhews in the eastern States, in the last century—of the apostolic Elliot—of the indefatigable Brainerd, and the exertions of the Moravian Christians, and the success which they have obtained, at once speak shame to our apathy and encouragement to our emulation. Verily we are guilty in this respect. We have not realized the deplorable state of millions of our species. We have been contented with wishes when we were called to action. We have folded our arms in sloth, or have wasted ourselves in contests of inferior moment, when we should have consolidated our strength in the cause of the common salvation. Surely our friend, our brother, who delivered us from going down to the pit, "*who his own self bore our sins in his own body on the tree,*" merited a more grateful recompense. May not our backwardness in publishing abroad his praises be a cause of his controversy with us? May it not be, at least in part, to correct this iniquity, that vital godliness decays among ourselves, and the influences of his good Spirit are withheld from our devotional assemblies! Ah! the necessities of the heathen have long implored our aid, but implored in vain: and if they be still disregarded, the cry of their blood, succeeding to the cry of their wretch-

edness, may bring upon us a calamity which shall make the ears of every one that heareth it to tingle. Who knoweth but the Lord, to punish our insensibility, may, by a special providence, transfer our privileges to the inhabitants of the forest; may write upon our temple-doors, "*The glory is departed!*" and while he causes "the desert to rejoice and blossom as the rose," may abandon us to the desolating flood, and convert our goodly heritage into a barren waste.

Besides those considerations which address our sense of gratitude and of interest, there is another no less powerful, which arises from the peculiar circumstances of the times. Infidelity abounds. It hath assumed an imperious air, and glories in the expectation of a speedy extermination of the religion of Jesus. To confound its vain hopes, we are called upon to show, by our activity in the cause of truth, that the spirit of Christ continues to animate his body; that there is still life and energy in his church, and that the prospect is as distant as ever, of "*the gates of hell prevailing against her.*" If then, dear brethren, the souls of men are precious in our eyes—if the honor of our Lord Jesus is an object of our desire, or his commandment of our reverence—if gratitude for his wondrous love hath not fled from our hearts—if the consciousness of former neglect excites one emotion of shame, let us rouse from our lethargy,

let us strive to redeem by future diligence, our lost opportunities. While other parts of the church are earnest and active, let us not be like a palsied limb in a living body. In order to second the efforts abroad, by strenuous efforts at home, let us with cordial affection and mutual confidence, unite our supplications, our counsels, our resources. Should we even fail in our immediate expectations, we may aid those who shall have better success. And if sinners be brought to the Saviour our object is gained. In the temples above it will make no difference, whether they were gathered from the banks of the Mississippi, the Gambia, or the Ganges. But to effect any part of so vast a design, good wishes are not sufficient. The wisest and most benevolent plan must be defeated, without encouragement of a different kind; we ask, therefore, brethren, a portion of your *worldly substance*; we ask it in the name of Him whose you are, and whom you serve. “*Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.*” You have nothing but what you receive from his bounty. He poured out his soul for *you*; and is it a great matter, if, with a pittance of your carnal things, you minister to the interests of his kingdom? Let wealthy Christians remember, that “the liberal deviseth liberal things, and by liberal things shall he stand.”

Let the widow throw in her mite, be it ever so small. Her offering of love will neither be rejected of God, nor useless to man. As drops from heaven create the mighty torrent, so the feeblest powers, in combination, produce an astonishing result, and accomplish with ease, what theory would have pronounced incredible, if not impossible. Such, brethren, are our intentions, and such our requests. Shall we, in proposing them, incur the danger of repulse? Must we be disheartened by reluctance, or mortified by objection? Will any one slight our undertaking as romantic and chimerical? Will he paint to us the perils of the wilderness, the savageness of the heathen, their roving disposition, their diversified speech, their customs in everything abhorrent from civilized life? Will he dwell on the improbability of obtaining suitable missionaries? On the disproportion of our means to the end we have in view? Will he recall the successful issue of some former attempts, and thence predict the disappointment of our hopes? To all such objections we reply: "IN THE NAME OF OUR GOD WE LIFT UP OUR BANNERS." We have not amused ourselves with the dream of progress without obstacles, and victory without resistance. But we know also, that in difficult services, the grace of Jesus, and the power of faith are most conspicuous. When the honors of the cross, and the eternal welfare of men are at

the stake, we must not “confer with flesh and blood.” It is criminal timidity which whispers “*there is a lion in the way, I shall be slain in the streets.*” We cannot encounter more heart-breaking opposition, than was encountered in a similar enterprise by the apostles of the Lamb, and by the blessed Reformers. Those apostles and reformers who always triumphed in Christ, triumphed when Persecution waved over their heads her scourge of blood, and kindled around them the fires of martyrdom. With less to dismay, we have as much to encourage. If in the might of *Him who hath “all power in heaven and earth, they were more than conquerors;”* in His might *we can conquer too.* Nay, there is nothing more formidable in the experiment which we contemplate, than in a believer’s daily warfare, “*with principalities and powers, and spiritual wickednesses.*” “God reigneth over the heathen, God is king of all the earth.” *The silver is His; the gold is His.* His grace can fix the wandering and humanize the cruel; can quicken the sluggish, render the sordid generous, and embolden the fearful; can bestow an apostolic spirit for apostolic work; can make “worm Jacob thresh the mountains.” Let our hearts, then, swell with resolution, and beat high with hope. “*Glorious things are spoken of the city of God. For thus saith the Lord, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles*

like a flowing stream. I will lift up mine hand to the Gentiles, and set my standard to the people; and they shall bring thy sons on their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried on their shoulders. Faithful is he who hath promised, who also will do it." And distinguished will be our honor, brethren, if he vouchsafe to employ us as instruments of his word. Should he even, in his searchless wisdom, not permit our attempt to have the desired effect, the attempt itself shall turn to us for a testimony, and shall come up in a memorial before his throne; when the pageantries of the world pass into oblivion.

Finally, brethren, we intreat that our institution may not be misunderstood. Let not suspicion view it as a political combination. The kingdom of Christ, that kingdom which we have united to promote, is not of this world. We most solemnly disclaim all intention of associating for any political or party purposes whatever. Neither let it be interpreted as a conspiracy against the outward distinctions that prevail among us. With equal solemnity we disclaim all intention of interfering, directly or indirectly, with the internal arrangements or other peculiarities of any Christian denomination. The only end of our Association is that which, in singleness of heart, we have publicly avowed—the promulgation of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. To this, all who love him will

say, notwithstanding their smaller differences, God speed ! Under so pleasing an impression, brethren, we commit ourselves and our undertaking to God and to you. Without the arrogance of dictating, we beg leave to recommend the immediate formation of similar societies throughout the continent. Your own acquaintance with your local situation qualifies you to judge how large a district each ought to include. Let agreement in the great doctrines of grace be the basis of association. While this will be a principle of energy, in each society, it will be a strong tie of connection to the whole ; and will enable them to concert and to conduct a plan of harmonious and efficient co-operation. The hearty concurrence of Christians of different denominations in a scheme so interesting to them all, will be a token for good, that the Lord is about to build up Zion, and to appear in his glory. Amen
Even so, come Lord Jesus.

APPENDIX.

REPORT

OF THE

DIRECTORS OF THE MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

AFTER the organization of the Society, the first care of the Directors was to aim at laying a broad and solid basis of future operations. The frontier of the States, and the Indian country, exhibiting an extensive field of missionary efforts, required great attention, while they presented considerable difficulty. That a plan of missions might be devised with judgment, and executed with success, it was necessary to obtain correct information of both. A committee of inquiry was accordingly appointed for each of these purposes, and directed to prepare their reports as speedily as the nature of their business would admit. No printed documents supplying them with sufficient materials, they were obliged to have recourse to individuals scattered throughout the country, and many of them difficult of access. From these and other impediments, the committees have not yet been able to accomplish their object.

A correspondence has also been opened with the leading Missionary Societies in Britain; but no communications from them have hitherto been received.

An institution so novel in this country, and so much beyond the ordinary habits of religious enterprise as the present Missionary Society, could hardly expect to enjoy immediate and universal support. Yet it is not without peculiar satisfaction, that the Directors find that, in proportion as it is understood, it recommends itself to the approbation and affection of Christians of different denominations. Respectable additions have been made to the number of members; and both congregations and individuals have evinced their anxiety for its prosperity, by liberal and unsolicited donations

to its treasury. The funds amount, at present, exclusive of all charges, to nearly one thousand dollars ; which, though a small sum for any weighty undertaking, deserves to be viewed as an encouraging commencement.

The Directors have thought themselves warranted, even by existing circumstances and prospects, to appoint a committee to prepare, at their leisure, a set of instructions for missionaries, and to look out for persons proper to be employed in the service of the Society. They are not without pleasing hopes, that the Head of the Church will raise up, from time to time, candidates endowed with a missionary spirit, who will glow with zeal for the salvation of the heathen, and count it a distinguished honor to carry among them the sweet savor of his name.

Inquiry has already been addressed to them, to ascertain whether it comes within the design of the Society to educate pious and promising youth expressly for missionary labors. No office would be more gratifying to them, as they are persuaded that nothing can be more congenial to the end of the Society, nor to the wishes of its members.

The Directors feel a peculiar satisfaction in observing, that the missionary principle is not confined to their own association. It hath penetrated to the distant parts of the State, and produced, some months since, another Society, founded on the same doctrines, devoted to the same objects, and desirous of co-operating in the same plan, by the style of "The Northern Missionary Society in the State of New York." Articles of union, between that institution and the New York Missionary Society, have been proposed, and acceded to by the Directors, and will be laid before the Society for final ratification. They cannot but indulge the consoling thought, that the Spirit of the Highest hath begun the good work, and that he will carry it on till his people throughout these States shall combine their counsels, and consolidate their strength, in one grand and triumphant exertion to introduce his gospel into the "dark places of the earth, which are yet full of the habitations of cruelty."

It is to them a spring of no common elevation to learn, that the zeal for missions in the island of Great Britain, which first suggested the idea of Missionary Societies here, is so far from declining, that it gathers vigor with its age. Obloquy only serves to cement its

friends, and opposition to call forth its energies. And the probability, in which every gracious heart must rejoice, is, that at this moment Christ crucified is preached among the Pagans in the islands of the Pacific Ocean. Besides which, an evangelical mission is projected, and before now, perhaps, executed, into the interior of Africa. The Lord bless them, and keep them ! Grant Christians here to emulate, and even surpass their apostolic example ; and crown every embassy to the Gentiles with greater and greater success, till the whole earth be filled with his glory !

JOHN M. MASON, Secretary.

NEW YORK, Nov. 6, 1797.

In their proceedings on the above report, the Society resolved, That the education of proper persons to be sent out as Missionaries comes within their design: and it will, no doubt, receive their particular attention as soon as their funds will permit.

The Society also agreed upon articles of union, and principles of co-operation, with the Northern Missionary Society in the State of New York, to take effect whenever they shall be ratified by said Society.

The objects contemplated by the Society involving heavy expenses, and requiring the united exertions of its friends, it was judged necessary to solicit, from all the congregations throughout the country, with which it has any connection, annual collections for its funds. Little can be done in pecuniary efforts, unless those who long for the prosperity of Zion shall give their cheerful and persevering aid ; and from such aid, with the blessing of Zion's King, the happiest success may be rationally anticipated.

The Society having agreed that two sermons shall be preached at their next annual meeting, the Rev. Dr. LIVINGSTON, and the Rev. Dr. M'KNIGHT, were appointed to preach them: the former in the Scots Presbyterian Church, on the evening of the first day of their meeting; and the latter in the North Dutch Church, on the evening following.

The Society having transacted their business, with the harmony and affection of Christian brethren, and filled with pleasing hope that their labors shall not be in vain in the Lord, adjourned till the first Tuesday of November, 1798.

A D D R E S S
OF THE
CONVENTION OF DELEGATES,
BY WHOM WAS FORMED
THE AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY,
TO THE
PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES

A D D R E S S .

TO THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES.

EVERY person of observation has remarked that the times are pregnant with great events. The political world has undergone changes stupendous, unexpected, and calculated to inspire thoughtful men with the most boding anticipations.

That there are in reserve, occurrences of deep, of lasting, and of general interest, appears to be the common sentiment. Such a sentiment has not been excited without a cause, and does not exist without an object. The cause is to be sought in that Providence which adapts, with wonderful exactitude, means to ends: and the object is too plain to be mistaken by those who carry a sense of religion into their speculations upon the present and the future condition of our afflicted race.

An excitement, as extraordinary as it is powerful, has roused the nations to the importance of spreading the knowledge of the one living and true God, as revealed in his Son, the Mediator

between God and men, Christ Jesus. This excitement is the more worthy of notice, as it has followed a period of philosophy, falsely so called, and has gone in the track of those very schemes which, under the imposing names of reason and liberality, were attempting to seduce mankind from all which can bless the life that is, or shed a cheering radiance on the life that is to come.

We hail the reaction, as auspicious to whatever is exquisite in human enjoyment, or precious to human hope. We would fly to the aid of all that is holy, against all that is profane; of the purest interest of the community, the family, and the individual, against the conspiracy of darkness, disaster, and death—to help on the mighty work of Christian charity—to claim our place in the age of Bibles.

We have, indeed the secondary praise, but still the praise, of treading in the footsteps of those who have set an example without a parallel—an example of the most unbounded benevolence and beneficence: and it cannot be to us a source of any pain, that it has been set by those who are of one blood with the most of ourselves; and has been embodied in a form so noble and so Catholic, as "*The British and Foreign Bible Society.*"

The impulse which that institution, ten thousand times more glorious than all the exploits of

the sword, has given to the conscience of Europe, and to the slumbering hope of millions in the region and shadow of death, demonstrates to Christians of every country what they *cannot* do by insulated zeal; and what they can do by co-operation.

In the United States we want nothing but concert to perform achievements astonishing to ourselves, dismaying to the adversaries of truth and piety, and most encouraging to every evangelical effort, on the surface of the globe.

No spectacle can be so illustrious in itself, so touching to man, or so grateful to God, as a nation pouring forth its devotion, its talent, and its treasures, for that kingdom of the Saviour which is righteousness and peace.

If there be a single measure which can overrule objection, subdue opposition, and command exertion, this is the measure. That all our voices, all our affections, all our hands, should be joined in the grand design of promoting “peace on earth and good-will toward man”—that they should resist the advance of misery—should carry the light of instruction into the dominions of ignorance; and the balm of joy to the soul of anguish; and all this by diffusing the oracles of God—addresses to the understanding an argument which cannot be encountered; and to the heart an appeal which its holiest emotions rise up to second.

Under such impressions and with such views, fathers, brethren, fellow-citizens, the *American Bible Society* has been formed. Local feelings, party prejudices, sectarian jealousies, are excluded by its very nature. Its members are leagued in that, and in that alone, which calls up every hallowed, and puts down every unhallowed, principle—the dissemination of the Scriptures in the received versions where they exist, and in the most faithful where they may be required. In such a work, whatever is dignified, kind, venerable, true, has ample scope; while sectarian littleness and rivalries can find no avenue of admission.

The only question is, whether an object of such undisputed magnitude can be best attained by a national society, or by independent associations in friendly understanding and correspondence.

Without entering into the details of this inquiry, we may be permitted to state, in a few words, our reasons of preference to a national society supported by local societies and by individuals throughout our country.

Concentrated action is powerful action. The same powers, when applied by a common direction, will produce results impossible to their divided and partial exercise. A national object unites national feeling and concurrence. Unity of a great system combines energy of effect with economy of means. Accumulated intelligence

interests and animates the public mind. And the Catholic efforts of a country thus harmonized, give her a place in the moral convention of the world: and enable her to act directly upon the universal plans of happiness which are now pervading the nations.

It is true, that the prodigious territory of the United States—the increase of their population, which is gaining every day upon their moral cultivation—and the dreadful consequences which will ensue from a people's outgrowing the knowledge of eternal life; and reverting to a species of heathenism which shall have all the address and profligacy of civilized society, without any religious control, present a sphere of action, which may for a long time employ and engross the cares of this society, and of all the local Bible societies of the land.

In the distinct anticipation of such an urgency, one of the main objects of the *American Bible Society* is, not merely to provide a sufficiency of well-printed and accurate editions of the scriptures, but also to furnish great districts of the American continent with well-executed stereotype plates, for their cheap and extensive diffusion throughout regions which are now scantily supplied, at a discouraging expense; and which, nevertheless, open a wide and prepared field for the reception of revealed truth.

Yet, let it not be supposed that geographical or political limits are to be the limits of the *American Bible Society*. That designation is meant to indicate, not the restriction of their labor, but the source of its emanation. They will embrace, with thankfulness and pleasure, every opportunity of raying out, by means of the Bible, according to their ability, the light of life and immortality, to such parts of the world as are destitute of the blessing, and are within their reach. In this high vocation, their ambition is to be fellow-workers with them who are fellow-workers with God. .

People of the United States :

Have you ever been invited to an enterprise of such grandeur and glory? Do you not value the Holy Scriptures? Value them as containing your sweetest hope; your most thrilling joy? Can you submit to the thought that *you* should be torpid in your endeavors to disperse them, while the rest of Christendom is awake and alert? Shall *you* hang back, in heartless indifference, when princes come down from their thrones, to bless the cottage of the poor with the gospel of peace; and imperial sovereigns are gathering their fairest honors from spreading abroad the oracles of the Lord your God? Is it possible that *you* should not see, in this state of human things, a mighty motion of Divine providence? The most heavenly charity treads close upon the march of conflict and blood! The world

is at peace ! Scarce has the soldier time to unbind his helmet, and to wipe away the sweat from his brow, ere the voice of mercy succeeds to the clarion of battle, and calls the nations from enmity to love ! Crowned heads bow to the head which is to wear “many crowns ;” and for the first time since the promulgation of Christianity, appear to act in unison for the recognition of its gracious principles, as being fraught alike with happiness to man and honor to God.

What has created so strange, so beneficent an alteration ? This is no doubt the doing of the Lord, and it is marvelous in our eyes. But what instrument has he thought fit chiefly to use ? That which contributes, in all latitudes and climes, to make Christians feel their unity, to rebuke the spirit of strife, and to open upon them the day of brotherly concord—the Bible ! the Bible !—through Bible societies ?

Come, then, fellow-citizens, fellow-Christians, let us join in the sacred covenant. Let no heart be cold ; no hand be idle ; no pulse reluctant ! Come, while room is left for us in the ranks whose toil is goodness, and whose recompense is victory. Come cheerfully, eagerly, generally. Be it impressed on your souls, that a contribution, saved from even a cheap indulgence, may send a Bible to a desolate family ; may become a radiating point of “grace and truth” to a neighborhood of error

and vice; and that a number of such contributions made at really no expense, may illumine a large tract of country, and successive generations of immortals, in that celestial knowledge which shall secure their present and their future felicity.

But whatever be the proportion between expectation and experience, thus much is certain: we shall satisfy our conviction of duty—we shall have the praise of high endeavors for the highest ends—we shall minister to the blessedness of thousands and tens of thousands, of whom we may never see the faces, nor hear the names. We shall set forward a system of happiness which will go on with accelerated motion and augmented vigor, after we shall have finished our career; and confer upon our children, and our children's children, the delight of seeing the wilderness turned into a fruitful field, by the blessing of God upon that seed which their fathers sowed, and themselves watered. In fine, we shall do our part toward that expansion and intensity of light divine, which shall visit, in its progress, the palaces of the great and the hamlets of the small, until the whole "earth be full of the knowledge of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea!"

A C T

FOR ESTABLISHING THE

THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

AT

NEW YORK.

1805

AN ACT

FOR

ESTABLISHING A THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY,

*Passed at Philadelphia, June 4, 1805, by the General
Synod of the Associate Reformed Church in
North America.*

WHEREAS the ministry of reconciliation is the great means instituted by the Lord Jesus Christ for perfecting his saints, and edifying his body; and *Whereas*, he has required in his Word that they who are called to this excellent and important work, be furnished with gifts and graces above those of other believers; especially that they be faithful men; apt to teach, workmen who need not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth; wise stewards, to give the household their portion of meat in due season; able to convince gainsayers, to stop the mouths of unruly and vain talkers; to reprove, to rebuke, to exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine and authority; and to know how

they ought to behave themselves in the house of God, ruling well, and being ensamples to the flock. And *Whereas*, the aforesaid qualifications, since the miraculous effusions of the Divine Spirit have ceased, cannot be obtained in any other way than by his blessing upon the cultivation of natural talent, sanctified by his grace; which cultivation consists in a good acquaintance with those various branches of literature which are necessary for understanding, expounding, defending, and applying all the parts of revealed truth. And *Whereas*, seminaries erected for the especial purpose of instructing the rising ministry in things immediately connected with their holy vocation, are the most probable means of attaining the proposed end; have been cherished by the Christian Church with much affection from the earliest ages; and have been remarkably owned of God, for the preservation of her purity and glory. And *Whereas*, the Lord has been graciously pleased to incline the hearts of Christians, both at home and abroad, to assist the Associate Reformed Church in the design of establishing such a seminary; Therefore,

The Ministers and Elders, in general Synod convened, do hereby *Direct and Ordain*, That their seminary be forthwith established in the city of New York for the sole purpose of preparing for the work of the ministry such young men as, having passed through a previous course of liberal

education, shall resolve to consecrate themselves to the service of God in the Gospel of his Son.

And the Synod further direct, That the course of instruction in said seminary be conducted by a professor in theology, to be chosen by their ballot at all times hereafter, and to hold his office and emoluments until removed by a vote of two-thirds of the General Synod, which vote shall not pass till a meeting subsequent to that at which it shall have been proposed; provided that this shall not be construed to impair the power of the Synod, on any charge of gross error or immorality, to suspend a professor from the exercise of his functions, till judgment be definitively given.

And the Synod further direct, That the outline of instruction in the seminary be as follows, viz.

1. The scriptures themselves shall be the great subject of study.

2. The period of study in the seminary shall be four years; and the session shall continue for seven months successively, that is to say, from the first Monday of November till the first Monday of June.

3. These four years shall be divided into two equal parts; and the course of study shall proceed as follows:

Every student shall begin and close the day with exercises of secret devotion; uniting to prayer the reading of a portion of God's word;

and using as a help some book of impressive practical religion. In these exercises he is to read the scriptures, not as a critic, but as a Christian; as a saved sinner, who knows no other way of peace, but that which belongs to him in common with the least of God's redeemed; and who lives by faith, for daily counsel, and strength, and consolation, upon that Saviour whom he is afterwards to preach to others.

Such a portion of every day, (the Lord's day excepted,) shall be devoted to the study of the Scriptures in the original tongues, and of that literature which facilitates this study, as by a faithful improvement of time, may enable the student at the expiration of his course, to read the originals with tolerable ease.

The Holy Scriptures in our common version, shall be read in such daily portions, as shall finish the whole during the first period of two years: and to render the reading thereof more profitable, the professor of theology shall direct the student to succinct treatises on spiritual subjects, *as they occur*, and shall carefully examine him on these subjects.

Having completed this first reading of the scriptures, the student shall commence a second course of the same nature, dividing it in such a manner as to finish it at the expiration of his last year. He shall now consult the originals, step by step, as he

goes along, and have his course of biblical reading extended under the direction of the professor.

With his third year the student shall commence the study of systematic theology, and, as a basis for it, he shall commit to memory during the previous two years, the whole text of the confession of faith, and larger catechism. He shall read, on each topic, such proper books as may be digested within the time allotted, and may give him an acquaintance with the substance of the system.

The professor shall also lecture upon the primary topics of the system, following the general order of the confession of faith. That his students may enjoy the benefit of his whole course of lectures, he must not fail to complete it within two years. And, on the other hand, that this time may be sufficient, his lectures are to be concise and dense, accommodated to the principle that his work is not so much to furnish his pupils with thoughts, as to set them upon a proper train of thinking for themselves.

In the fourth year of the course, the professor shall also deliver critical lectures; which are to embrace not merely the philology of the context, but also its connexion, scope, and argument. No authority is to be admitted in these lectures but that of the originals; the student shall have them before him, and turn to the parallel texts cited by

the professor. These texts to be few and well selected.

Every student shall prepare in his third year, two of those discourses commonly called lectures, and two popular sermons; and in his fourth year, three of each; neither to exceed half an hour when deliberately spoken. All the scriptural proofs, cited by a student in any exercise of his fourth year, must be referable to the originals. Hours of study must be so distributed as to leave a suitable portion to miscellaneous reading, such as history, morality, belles lettres, &c. and to healthful bodily exercise.

And the Synod further direct, 1. That every student, on his admission, bind himself in a written obligation to strict obedience, to diligence, to peace, and not to propagate, directly or indirectly, any opinion or tenet whatever, contrary to the known faith of the Associate Reformed Church.

2. That students, who do not depend in any measure, for their temporal support, upon the provision made or to be made for such as may be in indigent circumstances shall pay into the hands of the professor, for the benefit of the seminary, the annual sum of twenty-four dollars.

3. That students of other denominations be admitted into the seminary upon the same terms as are exacted from those of the Associate Reformed Church; and on condition of their paying into the

hands of the professor of theology, for the use of the seminary, the annual sum of thirty-two dollars.

4. That no person shall be admitted as a student, without producing satisfactory proof of the following particulars :

That he has received a liberal education ; or has an adequate acquaintance with those branches of literature which usually enter into such an education.

That he is in full communion with the Christian Church ; that his habitual deportment is exemplary and prudent ; and that his natural talents are such as, by an ordinary blessing upon their cultivation, may render him an able minister of the New Testament. Presbyterian certificate, clear and explicit, to the above purport, shall always be satisfactory.

5. That in so far as relates to the enjoyment of sacramental privilege, all students shall be considered as subject to the discipline of that congregation with which they statedly worship.

And the Synod further direct, That the care of the seminary be intrusted to five ministers of the Associate Reformed Church, to be called *superintendents* of the seminary ; who shall be chosen by the ballot, and hold their office during the pleasure of the General Synod. The said superintendents, or a major part of them, shall have full power and authority :

To direct the application of the plan of study delineated within this act:

To regulate the library, and order the purchase of such books as may be necessary for it:

To regulate the discipline of the seminary:

To judge of the progress of the students, so far as to determine, without appeal, and at any stage of the course, whether a student can proceed with profit to himself and to the church of God; or whether, and how far, he should be remitted to his former studies; and for this end to appoint such tests of proficiency as they shall deem proper:

To make, generally, all by-laws for carrying into effect the design for which the seminary is instituted; provided, that they be not contrary to the constitution of the Associate Reformed Church, nor to any act of the General Synod.

It shall be the duty of the said superintendents to visit the seminary annually, on the Wednesday immediately preceding the last Wednesday of May, to consult with the professor on points not immediately involving his personal responsibility; to keep exact records of their proceedings; and to report to the General Synod, at the meeting next ensuing their said visitation, the state of the seminary, their own transactions, and such other things as they may judge necessary. The decisions and regulations of the superintendents shall

have full force and virtue, unless repealed by themselves, or by the General Synod; provided always, that contumacy on the part of a student toward any of the said decisions or regulations, during a visitation by the superintendents, shall be punished with immediate expulsion from the seminary; and that the offender shall not be restored, but in virtue of exemplary penitence, and by an act of the General Synod. If a vacancy shall happen by death, resignation, or otherwise, in the board of superintendents, they shall have power to fill said vacancy till the next meeting of General Synod; and shall then present to the Synod the names of two persons for each vacancy, and of these two the Synod shall choose one by ballot, to supply the vacancy for which the nominations shall be presented respectively.

If any of the superintendents shall be absent from two annual visitations successively without assigning any satisfactory reason therefor, such absence shall be considered as a resignation, and his seat vacated accordingly.

The superintendents shall elect their own officers.

They shall have power to draw upon the treasurer of the Synod for the amount of their expenses contracted by their annual visitation to the seminary, and the duties therewith connected; and the treasurer shall, without delay, pay said amount.

And the Synod further direct, That every Presbytery, as they shall have opportunity during the recess of the seminary, take cognizance of the improvement and conduct of their students; but that no Presbytery shall remove a student from the seminary, without the special leave of the superintendents; which leave, if his removal be solicited with the view of licensing him to preach, shall not be granted, unless the superintendents shall judge him qualified; nor shall any Presbytery take a student upon trial for license, without a certificate from the superintendents, bearing their judgment that he is suitably qualified.

*And the Synod further direct, That no student shall receive a certificate as aforesaid from the superintendents, unless, in addition to the essential requisite of a Christian walk while at the seminary, he be able, as a part of his literary qualifications, to translate into correct English the Pentateuch and Psalter from the Hebrew, and the New Testament from the Greek, *ad aperturam libri*.*

And the Synod further direct, That so much of the expense necessary for the maintenance of students in the communion of the Associate Reformed Church, as shall exceed the sum which they may be able to pay, and shall not be provided for in any other manner, be defrayed out of the revenue appropriated to the seminary.

And the Synod further direct and ordain, That

no alteration shall be made in the plan of education established by this act, until it shall have been proposed at a stated meeting of the General Synod, and passed by a vote of two-thirds of the members, at a subsequent stated meeting.

By Order of the Synod

JAMES MAIRS, Moderator.

JAMES GRAY, Clerk.

Further Extracts from the Minutes of the General Synod, 1805.

Resolved, That the professor be, and hereby is, directed to commence the course of instruction prescribed by the "Act relative to a Theological Seminary," on the first Monday in November next.

Resolved, That the superintendents be, and they hereby are, directed to meet on the first Monday in November next, at the city of New York, for the purpose of organizing the seminary; and fixing the place which the students, who have already spent some time in the study of theology, shall occupy in the course of instruction prescribed by the act of Synod of this date.

Resolved, That the different Presbyteries be forthwith informed of the establishment of a seminary for the instruction of youth in the knowledge

of theology, and enjoined to send their students to the city of New York, at the time appointed for opening the said seminary.

Resolved, That measures be immediately taken to have all our ministers supplied with the Scriptures in the original tongues, and with proper helps for prosecuting the study of them.

Resolved, That every minister be enjoined to pursue, in so far as it shall be applicable to his circumstances, and consistent with his engagements, a course of biblical reading similar to that which is recommended in the report on the plan for the seminary, to which they are referred.

Resolved, That every Presbytery be, and they hereby are directed, to devote a suitable portion of time, at least once in six months, to the investigation of portions of the Original Scriptures, previously selected for the purpose. That at least one of their number, taken in rotation, shall, at such meeting, deliver a critical dissertation upon some scriptural subject to be previously assigned to him; and that they keep a regular journal of their literary transactions, and preserve the dissertations among their papers.

The superintendents of the seminary are the Rev. Messrs. Robert Annan, John McJimsey, Alexander Proudfit, James Gray, D.D., and James Laurie.

A L E T T E R

TO

THE MEMBERS

OF THE

ASSOCIATE-REFORMED CHURCH,

RELATIVE TO A

THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY.

A LETTER,

ETC.

CHRISTIAN BRETHREN,—The printed minutes of the proceedings of the General Synod at their meeting in May last, will inform you that, through the good hand of their God upon them, they have at length succeeded in establishing a theological seminary. This institution, the sole end of which is to prepare for the work of the ministry young men whose hearts God hath touched, will recommend itself to public-spirited Christians. A slight acquaintance with the situation of our country will convince them that there is a most lamentable want of men “to labor in word and doctrine;” especially of “workmen who need not to be ashamed.” And it is most certain, that not every pious and zealous man is fit to be a builder in the house of God. They who are to instruct must be instructed. They who are to “bring out of their treasury things new and old,” must have their treasury stored with old things and new. *The*

priest's lips should KEEP KNOWLEDGE; *and they should seek the* LAW AT HIS MOUTH; for he is the *messenger of the Lord of hosts*. It is not seemly that one invested with such a character, and called to such functions, should be "unskilful in the word of righteousness." If he be "mighty in the scriptures," and prudent in his carriage; living under the power of those truths which he preaches to others, he will "commend himself to every man's conscience; he will feed his flock "with knowledge and understanding;" and will reflect honor upon the gospel. If, on the other hand, his attainments be slender; if, with the exception of some plain doctrinal passages, the Bible be to him a sealed book; if he be not able to remove ordinary scruples, nor to stop the mouths of gainsayers; if serious and sensible hearers do not obtain more satisfactory views of divine things and the divine word, *with* his aid, than *without* it; he may enjoy a transient popularity; he may even become the leader of an impassioned multitude; but he will not "build up believers in their most holy faith;" he will not be surrounded by steady Christians whose firmness may be counted upon in the hour of trial; nor, in the end, will he fail to bring contempt upon himself, and, what is infinitely worse, a reproach upon the religion of Jesus Christ. None decry talents and learning in the ministry but those who, being destitute of both, "understand neither

what they say, nor whereof they affirm." And if they assume to be teachers themselves, it is the interest of their vanity to prevent others from rising above their own level. However such men rail against literature, be assured, brethren, that an ignorant ministry is a dreadful curse. You have only to inspect the nature of the case and the history of past times, to perceive its mischievous tendency. Yet this is the very evil to which the age inclines. You recoil at the thought of its progress; and you ask, How shall it be arrested? We answer, that while the Lord alone can teach men to speak because they believe; and while he alone can thrust forth laborers who shall be ultimately successful, there are means within your own reach; means, the use of which you may lawfully connect with the hope of his blessing; and of which the *further* neglect will bring guilt upon your consciences, calamity upon your churches, and it may be, ruin upon your children. The means to which we more particularly refer is, PROVISION FOR THE INSTRUCTION OF YOUR FUTURE MINISTERS.

The Synod, thus far, have done their part. They have seized the earliest opportunity of founding a seminary where youth may acquire much of that cultivation which is indispensable to a well-appointed ministry. Had their encouragement been greater, they would have adopted this measure sooner; and it is not *their* fault that the

churches are not now rejoicing in its happy effects. But though they have encountered many embarrassments; though they have seen, with anguish, the backwardness of their people in supporting their efforts; yet they cherish strong hopes from the turn which matters have more recently taken. The liberality of Christians abroad, which has furnished them with an excellent library; the reviving spirit which pervades some parts of their own body at home; and their harmony in digesting the plan of instruction, they would consider as presages that their "labor shall not be in vain in the Lord."

On perusing their "*Act relative to a Theological Seminary*," you will observe that they aim at a more extensive and solid education for the ministry than has been usual in these states. They are sensible that their plan is at war with those loose and superficial habits which threaten the extirpation of all sound learning: that some will think the period of instruction too long—that others will suppose the extent of the country requires different seminaries—and that many will view the expense as an insuperable obstacle. All these things have been anticipated. The deliberations of the Synod were never more cautious, than when occupied with the affairs of their seminary. Difficulties were carefully surveyed; and excepting a small division on a very few of the less important arti-

cles, you have, in their act, the expression of their unanimous voice.

1. Aware how criminal it is to trifle with those invaluable interests which are committed to the ministry of reconciliation, they resolved to inquire, not what is customary, but what is right: to make a stand against the inroads of destructive fashion; and to fix the education of their own youth upon a proper basis. Under such impressions they have appointed a course of studies which they *know* to be of the *first necessity*; and which, with the Lord's blessing, will repay the diligence of the student, and the patronage of the churches.

2. In the present relaxed state of preparation for the ministry, it is not unnatural that *four years* should appear to many an unreasonable length of time to be consumed in previous study. The answer is plain. Four years run rapidly by. Indolence or conceit may fret at the detention; but the modest youth who husbands his opportunities will not find an hour to linger. Such as can form an estimate of Christian literature, will pronounce the period to be short enough. Such as cannot, and are therefore incompetent judges, should submit to the opinion of those who have made the trial; and have ascertained, by sorrowful experience, how hard, often how impossible it is, *after* entering into the ministry, to complete those studies which ought to have been completed *before*.

“The wants of the churches” have no force in this argument; because it is infinitely better for them to wait a little longer, and be well supplied, than to be condemned to spiritual penury for a series of years, by the settlement of unqualified men: and because the delay will be felt only for a year or two *at first*, after which, if the seminary be fed, there will be a regular succession of preachers.

3. The immense tract of country over which our congregations are scattered, and the hardship of travelling from the extremes, do certainly render it inconvenient to assemble our students in one place; and it may be asked, why steps were not taken to meet this difficulty in the beginning? Why several seminaries are not erected in such a manner as to consult our geographical positions? The questions are natural; and merit respectful notice. It may be replied, in general, that we cannot control circumstances, but are controlled by them. And a number of them have concurred to hinder, at present, the planting of more seminaries than one.

1st. It has been a work of nine years to plant *one*; and common prudence dictates that this one should be watered, and take root, and gather strength, before we think of more. The whole supply will be little enough for its nourishment; and if it be distributed among a number, none of them will have sufficient, and all will languish.

2d. At the commencement of a new system of education, it is wise to have our attention and affections concentrated: that the experiment may be fair, the plan perfected, and a model framed for future and subordinate institutions. Communities, like individuals, succeed best by doing *one thing at a time*. If different parts of a body which has not yet organized its strength, pursue, at once, different objects of the same kind, more toil and money will be expended, and less done to the purpose, than if the whole act together, and bring their united force to bear upon the several points of a common system, as their need shall direct, and their means permit.

3d. A theological seminary, without a library, is good for nothing. Every one, therefore, must have its own library. To divide that which is already in the Synod's possession, would be to destroy it, and misapply the bounty of their benefactors. The books which would be most indispensable to other seminaries, are precisely those which can least be spared. And to furnish every seminary with a library for itself, would absorb a larger capital than can be raised; not to mention that a number of the most useful books are very scarce, and are not to be had in this country; and frequently not from Europe, even were there no want of money.

4th. The advantages of several seminaries

would hardly compensate, as yet, for the additional trouble and cost. The distance from each, though certainly less, would still be great to a large portion of the students; and the *real* benefit confined to a few. Perhaps, too, the disadvantages in other particulars, might overbalance the advantage of local accommodation. After all, both good and evil are magnified in prospect; and it is neither impossible nor improbable that our difficulties will be less formidable in fact than they are in speculation.

Lastly—*One* seminary is now adequate, and will be adequate for some time hereafter, to the whole number of our students. When it shall cease to be so, will be the proper season for projecting more.

4. The inexpediency of more seminaries than one being admitted, many may still suppose that the spot for that one has not been well selected. Cities are generally expensive, and New York is undeniably so at this moment. Young men, who could support themselves comfortably at home, or in some more retired situation, will find their resources too scanty for New York; and many be deterred by that alone from the prosecution of their studies.

The difficulty is obvious, and is one of the most serious which we have to encounter. It is not, however, insurmountable; and there are conside-

rations, which, when duly weighed, may reconcile the churches to the place as well as to the plan.

An effective seminary must be attended with expense, wherever it be fixed; and an expense greater than would be suspected by such as are not accustomed to the proper computations. The notion of an institution that shall cost nothing, or but a trifle, and shall yet educate in a suitable manner, the rising ministry of a church respectable for numbers, and extending every day, is no better than a dream. Her friends, therefore, must either abandon the design altogether, and with it their own most precious interests; or they must incur expense, and devise methods of meeting it. There is no other alternative, and it would be folly to conceal or disguise the truth. In deciding on the *place*, their first inquiry is, *Where their object can be best obtained?*

If there be a choice of situations, they will, of course, compare the advantages and disadvantages of each, with a special reference to their finances. And after they have reviewed all those which would answer their purpose, they may discover, that in a place where much would be saved on some accounts, much would be lost on others; but that the difference, *upon the whole*, is not so great as to justify the smallest risk of injuring their institution.

Reasons will suggest themselves to a reflecting

mind, for preferring a spot among the *older* settlements. The state of society is more matured, more stable, and therefore yields not only more convenience, but also a surer rule of calculation. Pecuniary and literary aid can more easily be had, and is less liable to interruption. Ordinances, ministers, judicatories, are more accessible. The students must be expected to bear some proportion to the population; and it is prudent to consult the comfort of the greatest possible number. But, to whatever district your seminary be assigned, you must select for its site a country-place, or a village, or a large town or city. Without minutely examining their relative pretensions, it may be remarked:

1. That in either of the first two, it might be necessary to erect *buildings*, and to provide the whole support of the teacher, *neither of which are wanted at present*. Now, the interest of the capital sunk in the one, with occasional repairs, and the revenue appropriated to the other, would be more than the excess of other expenses attached to a city establishment, above those of an establishment in the country, or a village.

2. That, in the nature of things, an extra share of expense will fall upon that portion of the church which immediately encircles the seminary; and therefore it ought to be set down in a place which will not be materially affected by such a circum-

stance. Were it endowed with ample funds, this augmentation would be superseded; but in its infant state is decisive; and, in conjunction with other things, will show that the Synod have not been ill-advised in pitching upon New York.

Such a place has advantages which are worth paying for. Choice of Christian society; all sorts of literary help; opportunities of seeing a variety of gifts and excellencies in different stations; of studying the human character under a multitude of aspects, and with little trouble, &c.; all which are without price to an ingenuous and observant youth. Our people in New York have cherished the seminary with peculiar affection. Their contribution, always liberal, amounted for the last year to more than double any former sum.* There is no prospect of its diminishing, but rather of its increase. The presence of the students will tend to keep alive this laudable zeal, and to attract the patronage of individuals whom God has distinguished with this world's good. Nor is it unlikely that a removal of the seminary would be followed with a greater reduction of income than of expenditure.

Much being thus secured on the score of general utility, and nothing surrendered on that of economy, there can be no just ground of complaint

* The aggregate of contributions to the public fund, for the year ending May, 1805, is 1380 dollars; and of this, 804 dollars are from the city of New York.

against the existing arrangement; and it becomes the common concern to facilitate the operations of our long-wished-for institution.

Let our friends and brethren correctly understand what is expected. The students must apply to their studies without distraction. Some of them will require no pecuniary assistance: some must be supported in part, and some altogether. That they may not "lose the things which they have wrought," the Synod must have it in their power to say to their youth, "Be under no anxiety for your maintenance; produce what you can; and if it be not enough, we will take care of the balance. Only be sober, be diligent; and repay in improvement what you receive in money." If this be not accomplished, past efforts and liberality are thrown away; and, humanly speaking, there is nothing now wanting to carry into effect a better system of preparation for the holy ministry than has been hitherto introduced into the United States, but a little exertion on the part of our churches; nothing but a decent regard to some of the strongest obligations which can bind the soul of a Christian. We beseech you, brethren, by the tender mercies of our God; by the value which you set upon his gospel; by your sympathy with those who languish under a famine of his word; by your regard for the spiritual welfare of your own children, when you shall have gone to give up your

accounts; that you refuse not to encourage and assist the youth who step forward to consecrate themselves to the service of the Lord your Redeemer. They are your property; they are your hope. No man can tell what blessings he may be instrumental in bringing down upon himself, his family, his neighborhood, his country, by fostering an institution from which are to issue future ambassadors of the cross. Such institutions were among the earliest cares of the primitive and reformed churches; and to their influence, under the sanctification of the good Spirit of your God, do you owe the soundness of your faith; the purity of your worship; your religious light; that very ministry which you profess to revere and to love—nay, that divine Scripture which is in your hands. Far from you be the base and ignoble principle, which would whisper “that you have no more to do with those who dedicate themselves to the ministry, than with apprentices to any other employment, till they offer themselves, already prepared, for your approbation.” He is a singular Christian who can persuade himself that the church of God, which has a charge over every baptized infant, has no concern in the rearing of those who are to dispense to her the word of life. And far from you be the principle, equally base and ignoble, which stops the ear and closes the hand, whenever a pittance is asked for the most

sacred use. A *little* from each of you will nurture a seminary which, so far as human means can go, bids fair to adorn your pulpits with "burning and shining lights." Yours will be the consolation of compliance, and yours the guilt of neglect. You may say, that "we cannot tell whether the young men whom we propose to educate for the ministry, will answer our expectations; that, after they have been trained up at our expense, they may desert our connexion, or betake themselves to other professions; and, therefore, that it is profusion, and not charity, to lay out money upon such an experiment." Be it so! but, for consistency's sake, let the same doctrine govern you in other things. Never put a plough into the ground, because you cannot tell whether your crop may not be blasted, and then you will lose your seed. Never send your son to school, because you cannot tell but he may abuse his knowledge to the breaking of your heart, and then it would have been better for him to be as ignorant as the beast he rides upon, and you will lose the expense of his tuition into the bargain. There is no one duty which such an objection cannot set aside. Means are ours; events are God's. And we have no more right to expect that he will provide our churches with ministers, if we omit the appropriate means of obtaining them, than that he will clothe our fields and replenish our

garners, if, under pretext of trusting in his providence, we never handle a plough or a sickle! If any one pretend, that in soliciting your beneficence to their public fund, the Synod have laid schemes for oppressing or incommoding you hereafter, he is either deceived or wicked. They have freely communicated their plans; let facts interpret their motives. And when, on looking around, you behold every Presbytery under their inspection deriving benefit, directly or indirectly, from the application of their fund, pronounce for yourselves, whether they have plotted your hurt, or sought your happiness. With boldness, therefore, they appeal to you *again*. Thrice have they, in their judicial capacity, laid before you, on this subject, their ardent wishes founded on your own wants—in their act concerning a Synodical fund, passed May, 1796; and in their pastoral addresses of 1801 and 1802. Their recommendations have been seconded by the voice of Presbyteries and ministers; yet it has been their mortification to witness a strange supineness in many of their congregations. Will you not permit them, brethren, to augur better things? Shall your name, year after year, be stigmatized with the reproach of withholding a trifle of your substance from a generous attempt to build up the church of your God? How does *such* a reluctance, in a matter involving both your honor and your privilege, consist with

spiritual-mindedness, and “a treasure laid up in heaven?” How can you sit down under the shame of being less concerned for yourselves than are Christians at the distance of three thousand miles, whose munificence has enabled you to begin your seminary with high advantage, and left to your public spirit the light and pleasant task of carrying it on? How can you reconcile it to your sense of justice, that a small portion of your brethren should lavish their property in bearing your burdens; while many of you, *more opulent than some who have set you an example*, not only decline bearing their burdens in turn, but even touching *your own* with one of your fingers? Had all acted thus; had all been eager to reap the profit of exertions not their own, what now had been our situation! Some congregations which are settled, would have been still vacant—some vacancies that were languishing, and begin to flourish, would have been dispersed. In other places, ministers would have been worn out in extra duties, and their charges deprived of labors which they now stately enjoy. It is as clear as the light, that in so far as our public fund has been the instrument of our prosperity, those congregations and individuals who contribute not their quota, are really, though unintentionally, working for the common ruin. And if this same disposition continue, much more if it spread, the most sanguine will at length, be discouraged, and

the most patient grow weary.* The fabric which we are striving to rear will crumble to pieces; the hope of a skilful ministry will vanish; and all the dismal consequences will lie at the door of those who withdrew their shoulders from the yoke.

If we use not flattering words, brethren, it is because we are deeply serious; and because we are well assured, that if your seminary perish, there is no human expedient to save your churches from desolation. Here, then, is an object which, entering into the essence of your social stability, prefers a claim upon your purse which you cannot innocently resist. In vain do you "pray that Satan's kingdom may be destroyed, and the kingdom of grace advanced," if you will give *nothing* toward the means to which the Lord has directed for that end. We repeat it, a *little* from each of you is enough. Who will grudge a few miserable shillings once a twelvemonth, in an affair of such magnitude? Who will be the poorer at the year's end? or venture to insinuate that the Son of God, whose is "the earth and the fulness thereof," will remain in his debt for such a donation? The duty is plain, the promise pointed. "Honor the

* Numbers who have contributed cheerfully from the very first, are so indignant at the indifferent, not to call it the sordid, conduct of many of their brethren who are at least as deeply interested as themselves, that nothing but a sense of duty and the habit of doing praiseworthy deeds, has induced them to persevere.

Lord with thy substance, and with the first fruits of all thine increase; so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine." Do not act, brethren, as if the word of your God were unworthy of your trust. Let it never be forgotten that he *will have a share of our property*; and if we defraud him of our free-will offering, of the "first fruits of all our increase," he will wrest from our hands that abused wealth for which we do not make him an acknowledgment *in kind*. Many a delinquency of this sort has been punished with a bad debt, or a bad crop: and no man ever gains by the commutation. The winds of heaven, the devouring insect, or a famishing drought, often takes away more at a blow, than would be demanded for sacred uses in twenty years. Come then, brethren, and let us join our tribute to the temple of God. Follow up with your public spirit the token for good which we already see. Gladden the hearts of those noble youth who are very jealous for the Lord God of hosts; and who look to you as patrons and benefactors. *As the Lord hath prospered you*, is the rule. Let the rich man rise up with his gold; and let not the widow blush for her mite. The Lord will see, and will graciously reward; for "he loveth a cheerful giver." It is, moreover, a statute of his kingdom, that "he which soweth sparingly, shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth

bountifully, shall reap also bountifully." Do you believe his truth? Let the proof appear in your next, and the succeeding annual returns. Not one of you will repent as having done *too much*, when he comes to the bed of death, and contrasts things carnal and temporal, with things spiritual and eternal. Refresh our bowels, brethren. And may the Lord himself "open the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing till there be not room to receive it!"

By order of the General Synod,

J. M. MASON,

A. PROUDFIT.

New York, 1805

A L E T T E R
TO
THE SYNOD
OF THE
ASSOCIATE-REFORMED CHURCH,
RESPECTING THE
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
AT
NEW YORK.
1819.

A L E T T E R,

ETC.

*To the Moderator of the General Synod of the
Associate-Reformed Church.*

REVEREND SIR,—The experience and observation of fourteen years, embolden me to ask the attention of the General Synod to a few remarks on the subject of their theological seminary.

The faculties, which the Christian ministry require to be developed; the range of materials which it embraces; their various applications; and the readiness in which they ought always to be found, for instant use; besides the responsibility of an ambassador of God, present avocation, appalling to even a resolute spirit, and grievously mistaken by those who disparage the labors, and acquisition, preparatory to its efficient exercise.

The popular error on this head, and the tendency of things to fill the American churches with a flippant and barren ministry, have been perceived

by the Synod, and stamped on the principal features of their plan of theological education. It is very respectfully urged on the Synod not so far to yield to clamorous circumstances, as in the slightest degree to relax their system, although it may not hitherto have been duly executed; but to rouse all their vigor, in prosecuting the means necessary to insure its execution.

The work to be performed in their seminary is too arduous for the professional talent hitherto employed; an acknowledgment made, not for the purpose of reducing the work, but of impressing upon our churches the importance of more workmen.

The following departments in the seminary appear indispensable :

1. A department for the *original Greek and Hebrew languages*. It is unnecessary to dwell on this point. Every minister of sense and reflection, whether he be well versed in them or not, feels it every day of his life. He feels that no man can trust himself, as a safe expositor throughout, who is ignorant of them. A smattering knowledge is seldom better, and sometimes worse, than none at all; and it is much to be deplored, that the superficial character of college education in the United States sends youth to our seminary, for the most part, uninitiated in the first principles of the Greek tongue. The consequence is, that their teacher

must turn schoolmaster, and their own time spent in learning rudiments and words, when it ought to be employed in a critical investigation of the genius of the language itself. No method of meeting such a difficulty at the threshold has occurred, but that of a preliminary season for the exclusive study of the originals, before entering on the theological course.

This department, along with the scriptural antiquities, in so far as a reference to them is necessary for illustrating its phraseology, needs one professor; but as there is little new in it, after a man has once become versed in it, it is not incompatible with some other public engagement, and the expense will of course be less.

2. A department for biblical literature, embracing separately the *subjects* treated of in the Bible. Here is, in reality, the main field of instruction. Its richness, amplitude, variety, novelty, (for what student of the Bible does not constantly find in it something new ?) put into requisition all the talent, all the learning, all the skill of the preceptor; and all the courage, curiosity, effort, patience, and perseverance of the pupil. It keeps both at unintermitted labor. If properly conducted, the teacher has a task always to begin, for he must adapt himself to the different orders of minds, as they succeed each other under his inspection. It is altogether unlike the mechanical process of mere lecturing,

which it infinitely surpasses, and almost entirely excludes. From the pressure which it lays upon the instructor, it will never become fashionable; but it is the life-blood of your system, and that which forms, and if duly kept up, is destined to form, its peculiar characteristic; of which the unassuming, but unutterable value, can only be gradually unfolded in your growing ministry.

This department requires the whole time and labor of one professor, who ought to be entirely and liberally supported by the seminary, as it is not easy to find a person duly qualified; and he must be always an object of competition.

3. A department of systematic and polemic theology. A much less difficult occupation than the other; although they ought to have a mutual understanding, and yield to each other a mutual support. It may be easily connected with a congregational charge.

4. A department for composition and delivery. Here the discourses of the students are to be critically reviewed, with especial reference to the accuracy, simplicity, purity, and perspicuity of their style. They are to be trained to a just and natural mode of pulpit utterance, avoiding all affectation, all the artificial precepts of the schools which tend to form rhetoricians, but not orators, especially Christian orators—all coarseness, clumsiness, and vulgarity. Here the students are to be drilled into

that most difficult but most invaluable accomplishment—although nearly neglected everywhere—*correct reading*. It is a public reproach upon the ministers of the gospel, that very few of them can read a chapter in the Bible with common propriety. The most barbarous pronunciation, blundering emphasis, and disgusting tones, perpetually assail every cultivated ear. It is not imagined that the greatest perfection in the art of reading or speaking can effect a spiritual change, on the human heart; but it is a solemn duty not to exhibit the “word of life” in a form which, something like the spirit of martyrdom, is required to endure.

This department needs one professor, who, while the number of students is small, may, without injury to the institution, have another charge; but should it become considerable, will find his employment quite sufficient, from the multitude of its details.

These are views not hastily adopted, and therefore not lightly to be relinquished. The Synod will judge how far the strength and capacity of one individual are equal to the exertions which they demand. An allusion to personal situation is unavoidable; I must say, that I have felt myself overwhelmed, by the utter disproportion between their magnitude and my own feebleness. Under the weight, particularly of the second department, my strength has given way, and left me with a

shattered constitution. I regret, with health impaired, in the best of all services; the service in which it is my wish and hope to yield up my spirit, I regret that I have done and am able to do so little, and that our little school of the prophets, which I have cherished with all my faculties and affections, must proceed for some time with languid steps. The Synod will distinctly understand, that I do not pretend to encounter the whole of the labor which the just management of the institution calls for; nor even so much as I formerly attempted. The experiment has been decisive, and has demonstrated that I should only cut short a life, probably but short at best. Nor can I undertake more than shall consist with the attentions due to my ministerial charge, which can be suspended no longer. They have contributed, and are willing to contribute largely to the public purse; nor would it be righteous to convert their magnanimity into an instrument of suffering; which would not fail to react, with a hurtful efficacy, upon the seminary itself. All I can promise, is, to take the general superintendence; directing the students how to carry on their pursuits, and leaving the rest to God, and their own fidelity, to themselves; joining with this superintendence, instruction in the system of theology, and hearing their discourses. At present, I see nothing more to be done. It will perhaps be proper, to turn our

eyes immediately to the training up, from among our own youth, one who may be equal to the first department; and there are not wanting materials in the seminary, which may very shortly be fitted up. In all events, the seminary must not stop, or it dies; and its resurrection will be extremely improbable, as our church is likely to die with it. Most gladly would I welcome that day, which should permit me to resign my place to younger and more healthy hands, and to see the whole arrangement, such as we owe to the kingdom of God. It would help to gild my evening horizon, and conduce to the putting off my tabernacle, with satisfaction and peace. The passing hour is the hour of action. The good Lord inspire, direct, and prosper it.

J. M. MASON.

Philadelphia, May 29th, 1819.

A LETTER,

ORIGINALLY ADDRESSED TO THE MEMBERS

OF THE

ASSOCIATE-REFORMED CHURCH

IN NORTH AMERICA,

RELATIVE TO

MINISTERS' SALARIES.

1810.

A L E T T E R,

ETC.

BRETHREN,—The ministers and elders in general synod assembled, considering with much anxiety the state of the churches committed to their care by the Lord Jesus, and inquiring into the means by which his glory may be most extensively promoted in the advancement of those churches in knowledge, faith, and holiness, have judged it proper to address you respecting a duty which it belongs to you to perform, and the performance of which has the most beneficial influence on those objects, while the neglect of it is attended with consequences of the most injurious and ruinous tendency.

The most melancholy bodings press on the mind when we behold a large portion of the talents which the Head of the church has bestowed on her ministry for her edification, unoccupied, languishing, and expiring. This, brethren, is too common an occurrence in our day. A fault

there must be somewhere; perhaps in different quarters. But there can be no doubt whatever, that one great cause of this evil is the inadequate support afforded to ministers of the gospel, and particularly the tardy and irregular manner in which it is not unfrequently furnished. The effects of this ill-judged parsimony are alarming. When the ministers of the gospel find it impossible to devote themselves to reading, study, and research—when, like the Levites in the days of Nehemiah, they have fled to their fields to labor for their bread, instead of waiting on the service of the sanctuary—the inevitable consequence is that leanness and poverty must mark their public ministrations. It cannot be otherwise; people deceive themselves if they imagine that their minister can bring out of his treasure things new and old—that he can be a workman who needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth—on any other terms than an habitual and vigorous application to the study of divine things, and that too under the favorable circumstances of competent talents and a competent library. It is a fixed law of nature's God that a man, to be an intelligent instructor of others, must first be a diligent student himself; and no man can be either the one or the other, unless it be the exclusive business of his life. The habit of pouring out an harangue of trite and indigested truths, enlivened

occasionally perhaps with flashes of original genius, will not long answer the purpose of edification to any Christian congregation. To train up babes into men and fathers in the church of God, and feed them with strong meat, a minister must be mighty in the scriptures; not merely to cite them by rote, but to interpret them according to the genuine meaning of the Spirit of their Author, and to apply their doctrines for the refutation of existing errors, the support of contested truth, and the general regulation of Christian conduct. It is not a few hours snatched from secular employments and cares that will suffice for these things. Besides, the very routine of ministerial service, in catechizing, visiting the sick, attending courts of judicature, engrosses a large portion of a minister's time. It is demonstrably certain that no church ever can be well served, whose ministry is not exclusively devoted to their work.

We exhort you, therefore, brethren, that nothing be omitted on your part to secure this appropriation of your minister's labors. It is neither just, nor equitable, nor possible, that you should receive the whole of their labors, unless you support them liberally. In particular be scrupulously punctual in fulfilling your contracts with them. Give them no reason to suspect you of indifference to their comfort, or of trifling with your obligations. This is a matter of mere common justice. Not only

has a righteous God pronounced a wo to him that useth his neighbor's service without wages, but he has made the instantaneous payment of the debt a matter of special statute, *Thou shalt not oppress a hired servant—at his day thou shalt give him his hire, neither shall the sun go down upon it.* Does God interest himself for the servants of men, and shall he not much more interest himself for his own servants, who serve him in the gospel of his Son?

Want of punctuality in the payment of ministers' salaries, is well known to be a grievous evil, too generally prevalent, and while it involves them in the necessity of violating their obligations and promises, and thus exposes the profession to reproach, it ultimately falls heaviest on the people themselves. The minister gets chagrined with his people, and they with him, each justifies omission of duty by alleging the neglect of the other. Love cools, mutual reproach ensues, and an im-bittered separation is often the result. Brethren, let no ground of complaint on this subject exist for a moment. It is unworthy of the Christian name; it ought to be beneath you as men. Let it never be heard that the church of Christ keeps back the bread of those who feed her with the bread of life.

But, brethren, not only be punctual in discharging your contracts, but see that when discharged

they furnish an adequate means to your ministers to devote themselves to your service. You are entitled to the full benefit of all their talents, and exact your right with rigor. You ought not to be content with half service. Yet more than half service cannot be rendered when a man is obliged to devote his time and cares to secular pursuits. It is by no means even wished that gospel ministers should be rendered a rich body of men. And if the wish were entertained, a knowledge of the principles which operate on moral society would render every hope of realizing it chimerical. A ministry called and supported by their congregations never can be rich. The office is too honorable, and has too many precious consolations and glorious hopes connected with it, ever to be productive of wealth. These advantages are themselves an essential part of a minister's compensation; and for them he gives up the prospects of civil offices and honors, of wealth and ease. But he ought to be able to live among his people in a decent rank, to support a family, to educate his children, to pursue the studies becoming his profession, to bear the expenses incident to his attendance on courts of judicature, and to exercise hospitality, which the Divine Spirit has entered in the list of ministerial virtues. Such a support as will gain these ends is adequate, and everything less is inadequate.

It is an institution of the Lord Jesus, that the gospel ministry should be supported by those whom they serve, as much as it was an institution of Moses that the Priests and Levites should be supported by those whom they served. And when he sent forth his disciples, he commanded them to make no provision for their expenses on the principle that the laborer is worthy of his hire. "The Lord hath ordained (says Paul) that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel." It is the will of God, that if any work not, neither should he eat; that every man who laboreth should eat of the fruit of his labor, and that his ministry should be supported by their ministerial labors. It is on the due observation of his own institutions that his blessing is to be expected.

It is our wish to recommend this subject to the special notice of our vacancies. Let them take measures to be prepared for the support of a future ministry. A population increasing with unexampled rapidity, creates a demand for an increase of gospel ministers far beyond what is generally conceived. Many who may feel an inclination to devote themselves to the service of God in the gospel of his Son, will be disheartened if they have reason to believe that only the shreds of their time and talents can be occupied in that service. On the other hand, we do believe that if a reasonable prospect is held out that when young men

shall have expended their patrimony on their education, and shall have acquired those literary habits which disqualify for secular pursuits, they will enjoy a life appropriated to the duties of their selected station, it will fix many a wavering resolution.

Brethren, the glory of the Lord Jesus, your own edification, peace, and comfort, the stability and extension of the church of the living God, are deeply involved in the duties which have been recommended to you. We hope you will duly weigh them; and may the Lord direct you in this, and in all matters relating to his glory and your own edification.

R E P O R T

RELATIVE TO THE

COURSE OF INSTRUCTION AND DISCIPLINE

IN

COLUMBIA COLLEGE,

PRESENTED TO THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES,

FEB. 28, 1810.

R E P O R T,

ETC.

It appears to your Committee, that the primary principle of all sound education, viz.: *the evolution of faculty and the formation of habit*, although deplorably neglected in most seminaries, ought to be so thoroughly incorporated in the college system, and even amalgamated with its very elements, as to render progress through the classes, without due regard to it by both teacher and pupil, altogether impracticable. If the plan be so constructed as to require ability and diligence, the want of either of these qualifications in the teacher, will betray itself in the embarrassment of his department; and the want of either of them in the pupil, will be discovered by his habitual failure in duties, which a reasonable share of both would have fitted him to perform. Your Committee cannot for a moment suppose, that it is the intention of the Board to try that most fruitless and mischievous experiment—the experiment of

educating either the naturally stupid, or the incurably idle. A volume could not display the magnitude of the injuries inflicted upon letters, upon religion, upon morals, upon social prosperity under every form, through the protection granted to incapacity and sloth, by a timid indulgence or a chimerical hope. It is, therefore, indispensable that the public should see, and youths themselves feel, that future Students must both have faculties to cultivate, and industry to labor in their cultivation, or that Columbia College will be no place for them.

With a sufficient reserve for improvements which the vigilance of skilful instructors may point out in the practical details, your Committee think, that there ought to be an undeviating adherence to the following principles, and their general application :

1. *Exactness.* By which is understood, the learning perfectly what is professed to be learned at all.

This can never be attained without attention and patience—causing the subject to pass and repass, in close and frequent examination, till it become familiar, and leave an indelible impression on the mind. The exciting of such a habit of attention, as it is the first duty, so it is the greatest difficulty, and the most important victory of an able teacher, and the cardinal secret of sound education. To

produce it, he must insist, peremptorily and inexorably, upon *exactness*. His pupils will shrink, they will solicit, they will complain; they may feel a momentary despondence; but there is an elasticity in youth which cannot be long depressed; and a generosity which the firmness of authority, softened by a well-adapted soothing, can work up to astonishing efforts. This observation is fully verified in the history of the great schools in England, where accuracy is never dispensed with. The contrary course terminates in the worst effects. Let a lad "get along," as the phrase is, "pretty well"—let his ideas on a point, or his acquaintance with a subject, which he is required to master, be only general and confused—let him conjecture, where he should be certain; let his preceptor almost put the answer into his mouth, when he hardly knows which way to guess—and he is bribed to intellectual sloth; the season in which he should fix habits of discrimination, as well as of prompt acquisition, passes by; and though he bring to the college good native powers, he will leave it with a mind inert and unproductive. Let the idea, then, of a medium between scholarship and no scholarship, be for ever banished. Let the ideas of doing a thing, and doing it well, be identified in the minds of both professor and student; and let the doing a thing by halves be equivalent with not doing it at all.

2. *Punctuality.* By which your Committee mean, that the performance of all exercises should be limited to a certain time, and then be rigorously exacted. The teacher will, of course, take care that they be both reasonable and sufficient. Under these conditions, nothing but a physical impossibility, or such a hindrance as cannot be at all referred to indolence or evasion, should excuse for non-performance. Exactness is not to be expected without painful labor. Labor will not be regular and ardent without the hard pressure of necessity. Let it be ascertained that there is no escape; that the thing *must* be done, and it *will* be done. Such an urgency upon the mind disarms temptations to trifling, and often to vice; keeps it bent on the period and the matter of duty; throws it into strong action, and, perhaps, which is still better, into a sort of agony; hence spring the finest, the most magnificent effusions of human genius. There exists no more fatal enemy to diligence, improvement, and excellence, than the persuasion that "there is time enough."

3. *Progression.* By which your Committee would express a gradation of exercises, from easier and shorter, to more difficult and ample, according to the power of performance.

During the whole course of education the youthful faculties are to be kept upon the stretch. As they develop themselves and gain strength, they

are to be employed in work demanding severer tension, and more dauntless vigor. As in mathematical science, every preceding proposition is an instrument in the demonstration of those which follow ; so, in all the branches of education, everything which, before being learned, is an *end*, becomes, when learned, a *means*, and is to be applied, in its turn, to the remoter and abstruser investigations. On no account, therefore, ought students in the more advanced classes to spend their time in those elementary studies which occupy beginners. It is the impoverishment of intellect—it is a waste of life—it never can be necessary, unless the necessity be created by some mismanagement in the system.

In conformity with these general principles, it is the conviction of your Committee, that the hours spent by the classes with the professors, should be chiefly devoted to *examination*. It is the duty of the professor to use his information, not so much for the purpose of displaying it before his pupils, as to direct and assist them in getting information for themselves—to employ his sagacity and address in eliciting their faculties, and inuring them to the habit of *thinking*. The experience of different countries has shown, that regular attendance upon lectures, and profound admiration of the lecturer, are perfectly compatible with ignorance, with laziness, and with stupidity. If, as Dr. Goldsmith ob-

serves, there are many authors who "write through a volume without thinking through a page," there are also innumerable instances of youth going through a four years' course, and, as it is absurdly styled, "finishing their education," without having their powers, even for once, put fairly to the test.

In acting upon the plans suggested by your Committee, the instructions of the professors should be adjusted to each other, so far as the nature of their respective branches shall permit. This can be done to great extent and advantage by the professor of rhetoric and belles lettres, and the professor of languages. The classical, which are the principal studies in both our own and the learned tongues, are natural allies and easily associated. The professor of languages should point out, elucidate, and endeavor to make his pupils understand, those unrivalled specimens of taste, of eloquence, and of wisdom, with which the ancient writers abound; and the professor of rhetoric and belles lettres should refer for examples to those writers particularly who are studied under the professor of languages, comparing them with each other, with the best writers in our own language, and especially with the inspired writings. To exemplify:

When there occurs in the lesson of the day a splendid description, the student must be taught to mark the selection of circumstances—the order of

arrangement—the grouping of images—the choice of words.

When there occurs a fine and spirited criticism, as in every page of *Longinus*, to thoroughly comprehend his sense, and to trace the correspondence between his principles and his illustrations.

When there occurs an instance of able disquisition, as in the orations of *Demosthenes*, the Student should be obliged not only to translate his words, but to analyze his argument. The same principles, properly modified, should pervade the whole course.

In this manner we shall cultivate faculty; and our College will send forth taste, eloquence, and strong reasoning powers. She will pour out a stream of matured intellect, instead of trifling, as the American colleges have been too much accustomed to do, by ringing the changes upon the alphabet and syllables of their classical horn-book.

Your Committee are sensible that this method is not calculated to impart immediate eclat to the professors; but they are equally sensible that it will render the College incomparably more useful than she has ever been; and that it will eventually shed lustre upon both those who teach and those who learn.

They are also sensible, that it requires no ordinary degree of understanding, of dignity, of taste, of diligent and patient labor in the Professors; but

they judge also, that no exertion is too arduous, and no sacrifice too costly, to insure the highest display of these professional virtues.

Your Committee consider the course of instruction, according to the preceding views, to be, in reality, the *discipline* of the College; but they feel the necessity of some strong *motives* to enforce compliance on the part of the Students. These motives they conceive to be all comprised in that broad principle—*appeal to a sense of character*.

For giving to this appeal its just influence, they are of opinion that the system of *examination* should be improved, and should be accompanied with certain *coercions* which operate upon effort through the imagination.

The improvement which they would suggest, consists chiefly in rendering the examinations, especially the one which closes an academical year, most solemn and splendid; so that the figure which a youth makes shall be exhibited, and the rank which he deserves shall be proclaimed, under circumstances the most impressive and interesting to his mind. To effect this end, it is requisite that *he* and not his *Preceptor*, draw the attention of the assembly—that he stand or fall, absolutely upon his own merits; and, without impairing the tenderness proper toward an agitated, which is frequently the noblest spirit, that both the aid and the

reproofs common and needful in the stated class be entirely withdrawn. The bare expectation of such an analysis of his capacity and acquirement, will more powerfully affect him, and be a more regular and efficient stimulus, than all the fines which have ever been incurred. But it will be necessary to go a step further, and deepen the impressions to be thus produced, by adequate *rewards* and *punishments*. These may be,

1. Promotion *from one class to another*. The rule to be, that no Student shall, *upon any consideration*, be allowed to advance from a lower to a higher class, without being master of the previous studies.

Your Committee hold this rule to be of unspeakable moment. The practice of carrying boys along, year after year, as a matter of course, without regard to their improvement, or with so slight a regard to it, as proves in fact to be merely nominal, is worse than trifling. It is the death-blow to solid education, and the destruction of unnumbered youth. Nothing but ignorance, or disregard of the springs of human action, will engender or will embrace the notion, that a just ardor and emulation can be excited or maintained, when the idler and the blockhead are linked with the lad of industry and talent, during a four year's probation, and at the end of it, are admitted alike to academical honors. To produce and preserve

such ardor and emulation, a strong distinction must be instituted and kept up between those Students who acquit themselves well, and those who acquit themselves ill. The *cause* of deficiency (which does not include the effect of *perturbation* arising from awe and anxiety) is, in the judgment of your Committee, perfectly immaterial. The object of the College is to educate. Studies which precede, are only an introduction to studies which follow. Her course must be conducted on the assumption that they are mastered in their place. Whether it be from incapacity, from negligence, from dislike, from absence, from sickness, the want of preliminary acquisition must effectually preclude access to a higher class. Even the case which most excites commiseration and pleads for indulgence, viz. deficiency occasioned by sickness, should have no influence upon the rule or upon its execution. The general fact is the same; and a boy's unfitness is not the less unfit because it was his misfortune to have been sick. If the spirit of the course be cherished, he cannot get on in a superior class without a pressure which, instead of only urging him, may crush him altogether. It would be absurd tenderness to break him down with mental labor, because he has already been broken down by the hand of disease; not to insist that the exception itself is liable to extensive abuse. The Board will de-

mand no proof that it is a very possible thing for a lad to get sick in order to save his reputation. Advancement, therefore, from one class to another, must be, in itself, an argument and a reward of merit. This association, in the minds of both the pupil and the public, appears to your Committee to be of essential moment, insomuch as, without it, the force of other inducements will be impaired; and, if the rule which is to create it be broken through, the College will inevitably relapse. The chief difficulty may be anticipated in the end of the first, or Freshmen year. But this will probably be far greater in prospect than in experience. For if the statute respecting admission be faithfully enforced, such a mass of natural incompetency will be excluded, as to leave comparatively but little further obstruction which shall not arise from negligence. And the examination at the expiration of the first half year, will be an admonition which shall render the offender without excuse.

As an appendage to this rule, your Committee would observe, that a practice, of which an example is stated in the Report of the Faculty of Arts to this Board on the 14th instant, viz. the allowing boys to attend and study along with a class they were unfit to enter, with a view of qualifying themselves for entrance at a subsequent examination, must be absolutely interdicted. The impropriety is so glaring, that your Committee are surprised it

ever should have existed. For it is self-evident, that, if these extra-students can go along with the class, they were not unfit for entrance; and if they were unfit for entrance, they cannot go along with the class. Either, then, the studies of the class must be lowered to them, or they must be put to studies to which, by the very terms of the representation, they are unequal. In the one case they are sacrificed to the class—in the other, which is still worse, the class is sacrificed to them; and if this double classification be permitted, a principle is sanctioned which will speedily evade every possible precaution.

The principle to be chiefly regarded in all criminal jurisprudence, is less the *severity* than the certainty of punishment. A Student should therefore know, that dispensation with academical law, or connivance at escape from merited censure, are out of the question.

AN
ADDRESS

DELIVERED AT THE

ORGANIZATION OF THE FACULTY



DICKINSON COLLEGE,

JANUARY 15, 1822.

A D D R E S S,

ETC.

Gentlemen of the Trustees, and respected Auditors:

I ADDRESS you this day under circumstances of peculiar delicacy and difficulty. Dickinson College, which had long languished, and at last expired, is about being revived again. It comports with neither my inclination nor design, to institute insidious inquiries into the causes of its former failure. With great and good men you were favored in more auspicious times. For depth of learning, for accuracy of information, for splendor of wit, the name of Dr. Nesbitt will long be remembered; and the memory of his successors, who followed him, although it must be confessed, *haud pussibus æquis*, will be revered and revered, while piety is honored in Carlisle.

Many causes conspire to elevate and depress seminaries of learning, without great personal merit on the one hand, or personal demerit on the other. Over the vicissitudes which have happened

to this one, it would answer no good purpose to dwell; and it would savor too much of a vanity, which would but ill become those who are now entrusted with its management, to make boastful professions, and encourage high expectations of its future progress. Their labors have already been too highly appreciated, their powers have, perhaps, been too much applauded. The country has been taught to expect more from them than their talents and industry shall probably be found to justify; and they will have reason to think themselves happy above the common condition of men in their situation, if they shall not altogether disappoint the public anticipation.

The revival of a decayed institution being much more difficult than the establishment of a new one, as the resurrection of a dead body is more arduous, and certainly more uncommon, than the production of a living one; and as all the success, humanly speaking, will depend upon the plan to be pursued, it may be due to the occasion to say a few words on a subject, on which every body talks confidently, and few think correctly while the million prate without thinking at all,—the subject of *education*. Education, if I mistake not, contemplates three objects, the evolution of *faculty*, the formation of *habits*, and the cultivation of *manners*.

I. *The evolution of faculty*.—This of course

implies that there is faculty to be evolved. So, that like all created power, education must have its materials from the hand of the Creator. Itself creates nothing. It only brings out qualities which pre-existed. It is a manufacture, and, like all other manufactures, must have the raw material to work upon, or it can do nothing. Many well meaning people imagine that it is in the power of teachers to do everything; and hard measure do they give them for not working miracles—for not converting a booby into a lad of genius. My friends, you must not expect that we shall do what the Almighty God has not done. That we shall furnish brains where our pupils naturally are without them. *Ex nihilo, nihil fit*; whatever be the zeal and efforts of the instructor. If you look for *bricks*, your boys must bring the *straw*. “Pray, sir,” said a gentleman to another, who complained that his sons, who were indeed not of the race and lineage of Solomon, had not the advantage of early education, “Pray, sir, why cannot you give to those bricks,” pointing to an opposite pile, “the hardness and polish of marble?” “Because they are *bricks*, and work at them for ever, they will be bricks still.” Let a boy make the tour of all the Colleges *in* the land or *out* of it, if nature made him a dunce, a dunce he will remain, with the only difference of exchanging his ignorance for *impertinence*. I know no more thank-

less and desperate experiment, than an attempt to educate the naturally stupid. It may well enough consort with the vocation of a pedant, who, provided he has a head to hammer upon, is well enough satisfied; but it is grief, and misery, and purgatory, to a man of any sense or feeling. Persons with uncouth and rugged minds would be employed far better in following the plough, drawn by their more intelligent horses, than in making themselves ridiculous by endeavoring to obtain a liberal education. At the same time it must be acknowledged that the seeds of natural ability are pretty equally distributed, and that fine minds are often lost for want of culture.

*“ Full many a gem, of purest ray serene,
The dark, unfathomed caves of ocean bear;
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.”*

Yes, among these lads, who know no other use for their limbs than felling the forests, and no other for their activity of mind and body than catching the wild turkey, the pheasant, or the deer, there are some master spirits who need nothing but cultivation to bring them forth into their peculiar action—who contain the rudiments of the statesman’s skill and the patriot’s fire, and may, according to their places, become the Washingtons, the Hamiltons, and the Franklins of future days.

There are among these simple rustics men who, in former ages would have

“Wielded at will the fierce democracy,
And fulminated over Greece to Macedon,
And Artaxerxes’ throne.”

O could we but light up these chosen spirits, these minds which can balance themselves, and millions of other men! Could Dickinson present, among her sons, an array hostile, terrible, destructive, to all the legions of infidelity and misrule, she might well hold up her head amid the seminaries of the nation, and receive their homage, not less freely granted than richly merited.

But to return to the practical point. Faculty is not to be evolved without painful effort.

With those young men who go to a place of education as the other idlers frequent a watering place where they may saunter away their time out of their parents’ observation, and have nothing to do but amuse themselves and dash away as fine fellows, we wish and hope to have no acquaintance. The College ought to be, and by God’s assistance *shall* be, a place of *work*. Let no idlers, no mimicries, no mockeries of students disgrace our classes or pollute our walls. Should such unhappily creep in, we trust that in a very short time we shall show them out. Our great business is to keep the youthful mind under a pretty constant but not an unrea-

sonable pressure—such a pressure as will insure tolerable accuracy. Let a lad “get along,” as the phrase is, “pretty well”—let his ideas on a subject “which he is required to master be only general and confused—let his preceptor almost put the answer into his mouth when he hardly knows which way to guess—and he is bribed to intellectual sloth. The season in which he should fix habits of discrimination, as well as of prompt acquisition, passes by, and though he bring to the College good native powers, he will leave it with a mind inert and unproductive. The idea, then, of a medium between scholarship and no scholarship must be forever banished. The ideas of *doing* a thing and *doing it well*, must be identified in the minds of both teacher and pupil, and the idea of doing a thing by *halves* be equivalent with that of *not doing it at all*.

It is manifest that, upon such a plan, the pupil must, after all, be in a great degree his own instructor, and if he will not act upon this plan, all the power in creation cannot educate him. It is ours to watch, to guide, to direct him, to keep him from wasting the talents which God has given him. Further than this we cannot go. The main concern is still in his own hand. A habit of close application, which can be acquired only by his own industry, is the most precious fruit of a solid education. The quantity which a young man learns at

College is next to nothing in the business of life. Let him get the habit of close attention, of painful and persevering application, and I will freely compound for the loss of all his College learning; and be little concerned if I even knew that he should make no use of it during the rest of his life.

Yet to this habit of painful and steady attention, a skillful instructor can contribute much. A great deal can be done by enforcing *punctuality*. By which I mean "that the performance of all exercises should be limited to a certain time both sufficient and reasonable, and then be *rigorously* exacted. His pupils will shrink, they will solicit, they will complain. They may feel a momentary despondence; but there is in youth an elasticity which cannot be long depressed, and a generosity which the firmness of authority, tempered by a well-adapted soothing, can work up to astonishing efforts. This is, therefore, a point upon no consideration to be given up. Labor will not be regular and ardent without the hard pressure of necessity. Let it be ascertained that there is no escape—that the thing *must* be done, and it *will* be done. Such an urgency upon the mind disarms temptations to trifling, and often to vice, keeps it bent on the matter and the period of duty, throws it into a strong action, and perhaps, which is still better, into a sort of agony. Hence spring the finest and most magnificent effusions of human

genius. There exists no more fatal enemy to diligence, improvement, and excellence, than the notion that there is time enough."

II. I have said that education contemplates the *formation of habit*. By this I understand not merely intellectual habits, but those which entwine themselves with the moral character, and exert an influence upon all the dignity and happiness of future life.

It is no small libel upon some seminaries, and not the less so for being true, that youth there learn so many things which they should not learn, and that all faults are venial if the understanding be well disciplined. I cannot conceive any greater opprobrium upon a seminary than that a student should become vicious, as in general intellect he becomes enlightened. To have the places of education mere reservoirs of immorality, what can be more shocking? To have them, on the contrary, *sources* of pure, refined, and exalted virtue, what can more contribute to the happiness of parents, to the peace of the surrounding neighborhood, to the glory of the land? On this, which is a large theme, I shall briefly advert to two habits, which, though of apparently minor importance, mingle themselves with all the duties and occasions of life.

1. *Subordination to authority*. I regret to say, that in all the departments of society, from the parental control to that of the government, this is held

by our youth in too little esteem. Their ambition, very early evinced, is to be manly and to be free. They are therefore, prone to spurn restraint, and to take their own way; esteeming that to be a noble spirit which acknowledges no superior; and that to be true liberty which follows its own pleasures. That the prevalence of such a temper should produce wide-spreading mischief is manifest to every sound thinker; and often to the youth themselves, when it is too late to undo the consequences. In the meantime it militates alike against the very constitution of our nature—against the most express commandments of God, and against those principles of action which, at all times and in every place, but, from peculiar causes, in the present day and in our own country, are necessary to the order of society and the happiness of individuals.

It militates against the very *constitution of our nature*. It is not for nothing; it is for benign and wise purpose, that our Creator has determined we should come into the world utterly feeble and helpless. The first friend whom the infant recognizes is his mother. To her tenderness, her watchfulness, her patience, he probably owes more than to the kindness of any of his species. Under her gentle auspices, the first buddings of his rational nature begin to unfold. To her is allotted the delightful province of teaching “the young idea how

to shoot"—of moulding the heart—of cherishing all its amiable and generous affections—of storing it with the "sweet charities of life"—of leading it in filial piety to God the Sovereign good. The rudiments of many a character, distinguished for virtues honored both on earth and in heaven, can be traced to the nursery and the lap. O most charming employment! rich compensation for the seclusion, the anxieties, the pains, to which the sex is destined! O most refreshing abatement of the sorrows of that cup which has been assigned to woman for her priority in transgression!

Then comes the father, appointed by the divine mandate, to be the head of the domestic establishment. His family is his kingdom; his children are his subjects; and he is the governor in his own house. These young subjects are submitted to his rule; he knows best, at least better than they, what is for their good. His authority is to be their reason for many, for most things, while they are quite young. And should they prove refractory, his superior physical force can, and should, constrain their submission. If, therefore, *both* parents perform their duty, their children, notwithstanding the dreadful drawback of human depravity, will generally grow up trained to obedience. Their habits will be incorporated into their character. They cannot become rude and disorderly without violating all the sense of deco-

rum and gratitude; and breaking through, besides all their early habits. The common sense of mankind is in accordance with all this. A rough, surly, ungovernable, boy, there is nothing more common than to call an *unnatural child*. Thus are children, by the very condition of their being, made fit subjects for *order*, which is "Heaven's first law." And he who requites his parents' care by vicious courses; by giving himself up to the service of iniquity which is the essential *disorder*, though he should be one of the "fairest spirits" that ever "lost heaven," and should be plausible and seducing as Belial himself, deserves no other appellation than that of a *monster*. The spirit of insubordination, moreover, militates against the *most express commands of God himself*.

His commandments are in unison with the constitution of his world. From the highest to the lowest, their tendency is to promote order. His very controversy with sin and sinners turns exactly upon this point, whether *He* shall govern his own creation, or they shall do as they please. And, therefore, there is no regulation of human conduct prescribed with more peremptoriness, and under greater variety of forms, than obedience to law. This broad injunction covers the whole ground of our social relations—"Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing to the Lord." The admonition is addressed to them

when they are of years to reflect and successfully to resist. No thanks to you, young people, if you obey when you cannot, and dare not, disobey. Everlasting reproach be to your parents if they permit such early insubordination. But when you are grown to have some understanding of your own—when your physical strength enables you to defy both mother and father, then the voice from the excellent glory speaks unto you: “My son, receive the instruction of your father,” and adds, with unutterable tenderness, “despise not thy mother *when she is old.*” So also with respect to servants: “Servants be obedient to your masters according to the flesh.” So likewise with respect to political government: “Put them in mind to obey magistrates. Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake, whether it be to the king as supreme, or to governors, as unto those that are sent by him for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well.”

A young man, therefore, who cherishes a temper of disobedience towards his superiors, plants himself down in a path where the machinery, established by his Maker, must go, and will infallibly crush him to atoms. Once more. This spirit of insubordination militates against those *principles* of action which at all times and in every place, but *especially in our own day and country*, are necessary to the peace of society and to the happiness of

individuals. I shall waive the first part of this proposition for the sake of the second.

We live in a republican country Its means of keeping up good government are entirely moral. The government of force it rejects, as fit only for slaves. What, then, shall become of the public order, if our youth, who are shortly to be the governors, cherish a spirit of disorder? What of republican government, and of our country, which has been called "the world's last hope?" Wherein shall we be able to compare with the governments of Europe, which we term despotic, if we ourselves exhibit a spirit of misrule, and hasten, by our own imprudence, the approach of that day when the coercion of the bayonet shall be necessary to bring us to our senses?

2. There is another habit of immense value in all the concerns of life. I mean the *proper employment and distribution of time*. Of time, more precious than rubies, and of which, of all the three score and ten years which form the limit of by far the greater proportion of men upon earth, only the *present moment* is our own. Young people always calculate upon futurity, and almost always neglect the passing hour; that is, they speculate upon that in which they have no interest, and squander away that in which they have. It would terrify men beyond the power of expression, would they realize that the "breath in their nostrils" is all that they

can claim! that the present pulsation of their hearts gives them no assurance that they shall have a pulsation more! Yet upon this brittle, uncertain tenure hangs their computation for both worlds! How immense, then, the importance of learning to make the most of what they have! How can that be learned more effectually than by having the intervals of time filled up; and a constant pressure upon the mind to make every one of them *tell*. Idleness is universally the parent of vice; and it is one of the most fruitful sources of juvenile corruption, that they have so many hours in which, they *have nothing to do*. Your own famous Rit-tenhouse used to say, that he once thought *health* the most precious of all human possessions! "Is it not?" exclaimed an astonished visitor. "What, then, is it?" "Time!" exclaimed the sage; "Time!" Instead, therefore, of having a great deal of time loose upon their hands, youth are most kindly and wisely dealt with, by their having none, or next to none. And of how much value it will be hereafter to acquire the habit of being always *busy*, let those determine who are the most active and efficient men in the various walks of public and private industry.

3. I have said that education includes the *cultivation of manners*. I mean by *manners* all those lighter things in conduct, which though they

do not occupy the rank of morals, do yet belong to the embellishments and ornaments of life.

I hardly know how it has happened, that a "Scholar" is become a common term for everything unpolished and uncouth. Some men indeed, by the greatness of their genius and the immensity of their erudition, have attained a sort of privileged exemption from the common courtesies of society. But the misery is, that the same exemption is claimed by those who have only rudeness, which they mistake for genius; and disregard of civility, which passes with them for erudition. Thus if scholars are sometimes awkward and absent, every awkward, inattentive creature, calls himself a scholar. Just as, to use a comparison of the late Mr. Gouverneur Morris, "because statesmen have been called knaves, every knave should, of course, suppose himself a statesman." Certain, however, it is, that no young men have enjoyed the reputation of being ill-bred, unmannerly, and vulgar, more than Students of Colleges. How is this? Is there anything in the retreats of the muses to cherish ferocity? Do men necessarily become brutes, when the world gives them credit for becoming philosophers? Does the acquisition of science, especially moral science, involve the destruction of decency? So that after a young man has left College laden with all its honors, he has again to be put to school, in

practical life, before he can be fit for the company of gentlemen and ladies! I blush to think that the place, which of all others, is supposed to teach a young man manners, is the army. That the kindness, the courtesy, the chivalry of life, should be associated with the trade of blood! That the pistol and the dagger should be the measure of morals and of politeness with *gentlemen*: and that when they have trampled under their feet every law of God and man; and all that is dear to human happiness, and ought to be of high account in human society, is made the sport of momentary passion, they should still be allowed to pass for men of *breeding* and *honor*! There is something rotten in the state of Denmark!

The old adage, though not true in the extent to which it has been carried, is yet true in a great degree,

*“Ingenuas didicisse fideliter, artes,
Emollit mores, nec sinit esse feros.”*

Let the “*molles mores*” of the sons of Dickinson show that they have faithfully studied the “*artes ingenuas*.”

This intellect it is true cannot be evolved; nor these habits formed, nor these manners cultivated, without exact *government*. Let not my young friends be startled by the terms *exact government*. I do not mean the government of brute force, nor

the government of mere stern authority. I know that these methods have been sometimes tried, and have always failed; and I scruple not to say, ought always to fail. Some men have imagined the youth of our country to be naturally ferocious, and have applied to them the same sort of means as they would have applied to an intractable beast. Some men have again supposed, that there is no way of supporting their authority, but by distance, by austerity, by menace. I am neither disappointed, nor displeased, at their complete discomfiture. And I am free to confess that if there be not something in the character and carriage of the governor which, of its own accord, invites confidence and ensures respect, all artificial substitutes will speedily prove their insufficiency.

With respect to the accusation which has frequently been brought against our youth, of their being more untoward and unruly than youth of other countries, at their age and in their circumstances, I must take the liberty to call this a mere calumny. And must say further, that when such conduct has been evinced, in any considerable degree, the fault has been at least as much in the governors as in the governed. I have been young myself, and have not forgotten my youthful feelings. I never could find in my heart, nor see in my fellows, the smallest disposition to act with any contumely towards a man who knew how to

treat us as gentlemen; nor with any respect towards a man who did not. Let this rule be freely and fairly applied. I submit to all the consequences, and I think I may answer for all my colleagues. I am full well aware of the peril of this declaration, but have no inclination to shun it. I can speak, and I hope may speak on this occasion, without the charge of egotism, from my own experience. For more than twenty years I came into immediate contact with the children of a large congregation; for nearly fifteen years it was my lot to direct the studies of young men for the Christian ministry, and for five years of that period, I was called to the government of one of our most considerable colleges; and in all time I never met with an instance of personal disrespect from a young person in any one of them. I have no fear of it now; for I cannot suppose that the youths of Dickinson will impose on me the necessity of making them a dishonorable exception. What, then, is the government which ought to be pursued, and will perform such miracles among young men? One which is very plain, very simple, though unhappily not very common; and one which will carry the process through, from a family up to a nation. The whole secret consists in being *reasonable*, being *firm*, and being *uniform*.

1. In being *reasonable*. Whatever you require must be such as cannot fairly be objected to; such

as belong to the situation of your pupil, his duties, and his time of life. It is a very strong point gained to have his conscience on your side. You are not to demand what he is unable to perform; and if such happen to be his situation, it must be altered accordingly. Great care must then be taken to see that your commands are reasonable; this matter being settled, I say,

2. That a good government ought to be *firm*. Entreaty and supplication ought to have no more influence upon its proceedings than upon the bench of the Supreme Court; and a youth should count no more upon its pliancy. I do not mean to assert that a teacher or governor of youth should never acknowledge an error, or that he should obstinately adhere to a thing because he has said or ordered it. He is a miserable pauper whom the loss of a sixpence will bankrupt; and in intellectual matters he is no richer, who cannot afford to confess a mistake. He must not, indeed, do this often. But occasionally, as *humanum est errare*, he may, by owning that he has been mistaken, doing it freely, doing it magnanimously, attach the affections of the youth very strongly to his person, and affirm his authority by those very means which would weaken it in an undecided and incapable man.

3. I add, once more, that a government, to be good for anything, must be *uniform*. By uniform, I mean that it shall be habitually the same thing;

that when you have its decisions at one time, you know where to find them at another; that it shall not be marked by whim; shall not be moved out of its course by gusts of passion; shall not, in a fit of great good humor, allow to-day, what, in a fit of ill humor, it will forbid to-morrow; shall not, therefore, tease and vex the subjects of it by its fickleness and variableness. These should always know what they have to depend upon; and not see the elements of *order* disturbed and broken up by the prevalence of *official disorder*. Against a government administered upon such principles and marked in its several acts by courtesy, by kindness, by the frankness and dignity of gentlemen, I am persuaded that depravity herself could not muster up anything like a formidable conspiracy.

Such, gentlemen, we profess to be our aim; and in the prosecution of such an aim we feel confident of your support. Although we do not expect to have much, if any reason to apply for it. We do not hope, that an appeal to the understanding, the magnanimity, the conscience, of the students, will effectually preclude those scenes of misrule which have occasionally tarnished the history of other colleges; and that affection will do for us what the exercise of mere authority has not been able to do for others—attach the students more and more to the interests of their *Alma Mater*. After all, young gentlemen, students of this institution, her success

is, in a great measure, in your hands. Have we deceived ourselves in expecting from you a chivalrous sense of moral honor? A delicate noble sensibility to character, and all the decencies and elegance of character? a high respect for order and decorum, even in slighter matters? an ardent love of your studies and corresponding industry? If we have not; if our expectations are well founded; if you shall bear us out in our hopes respecting you, then shall our efforts be animated, our labors sweetened, our success cheering, and Dickinson College revive from her desolations, a phoenix of renewed life, and spreading her lustre over your county, your state, your country, be a source of mild and enduring glory in ages to come.

A
FUNERAL ORATION
• ON THE
DEATH OF GENERAL WASHINGTON,
DELIVERED IN THE
BRICK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,
IN THE
CITY OF NEW YORK,
22d FEBRUARY, 1800.

FUNERAL ORATION.

FELLOW-CITIZENS,—The offices of this day belong less to eloquence than to grief. We celebrate one of those great events, which, by uniting public calamity with private affliction, create in every bosom a response to the throes of an empire. God, who doeth wonders, whose ways must be adored but not questioned, in severing from the embraces of America her first-beloved patriot, has imposed on her the duty of blending impassioned feeling with profound and unmurmuring submission. An assembled nation, lamenting a father in their departed chief; absorbing every inferior consideration in the sentiments of their common loss; mingling their recollections and their anticipations; their wishes, their regrets, their sympathies, and their tears; is a spectacle not more tender than awful, and excites emotions too mighty for utterance. I should have no right to complain, Americans, if, instead of indulging me with your atten-

tions, you should command me to retire, and leave you to weep in the silence of woe. I should deserve the reprimand were I to appear before you with the pretensions of eulogy. No! Eulogy has mistaken her province and her powers when she assumes for her theme the glory of WASHINGTON. His deeds and his virtues are his high eulogium. His deeds most familiar to your memories—his virtues most dear to your affections. To me, therefore, nothing is permitted, but to borrow from yourselves. And though a pencil more daring than mine would languish in attempting to retrace the living lines which the finger of Truth has drawn upon your hearts, you will bear with me, while, on a subject which dignifies everything related to it, “I tell you that which you yourselves do know.”

The name of WASHINGTON, connected with all that is most brilliant in the history of our country and in human character, awakens sensations which agitate the fervors of youth, and warm the chill bosom of age. Transported to the times when America rose to repel her wrongs and to claim her destinies, a scene of boundless grandeur bursts upon our view. Long had her filial duty expostulated with parental injustice. Long did she deprecate the rupture of those ties which she had been proud of preserving and displaying. But her humble intreaty spurned, aggression followed by the rod, and the rod by

scorpions, having changed remonstrance into murmur, and murmur into resistance, she transfers her grievances from the throne of earth to the throne of heaven, and precedes by an appeal to the God of battles her appeal to the sword of war. At issue now with the mistress of the seas—unfurnished with equal means of defence—the convulsive shock approaching—and every evil omen passing before her—one step of rashness or of folly may seal her doom. In this accumulation of trouble, who shall command her confidence, and face her dangers, and conduct her cause? God, whose kingdom ruleth over all, prepares from afar the instruments best adapted to his purpose. By an influence which it would be as irrational to dispute as it is vain to scrutinize, he stirs up the spirit of the statesman and the soldier. Minds, on which he has bestowed the elements of greatness, are brought by his providence into contact with exigencies which rouse them into action. It is in the season of effort and of peril that impotence disappears and energy arises. The whirlwind which sweeps away the glowworm, uncovers the fire of genius, and kindles it into a blaze that irradiates at once both the zenith and the poles. But among the heroes who sprung from obscurity when the college, the counting-house, and the plough, teemed with “thunderbolts of war,” none could, in all respects, meet the wants and the wishes of America.

She required, in her leader, a man reared under her own eye; who combined with distinguished talent a character above suspicion; who had added to his physical and moral qualities the experience of difficult service; a man who should concentrate in himself the public affections and confidences; who should know how to multiply the energies of every other man under his direction, and to make disaster itself the means of success—his arm a fortress and his name a host. Such a man it were almost presumption to expect; but such a man all-ruling heaven had provided, and that man was WASHINGTON.

Pre-eminent already in worth, he is summoned by his country to the pre-eminence of toil and of danger. Unallured by the charms of opulence—unappalled by the hazard of a dubious warfare—unmoved by the prospect of being, in the event of failure, the first and most conspicuous victim, he obeys her mandate because he loves his duty. The resolve is firm, for the probation is terrible. His theatre is a world; his charge, a family of nations; the interest staked in his hands, the prosperity of millions unborn in ages to come. His means, under aid from on high, the resources of his own breast, with the raw recruits and irregular supplies of distracted colonies. O crisis worthy of such a hero! Followed by her little bands, her prayers and her tears, Washington espouses

the quarrel of his country. As he moves on to the conflict every heart palpitates and every knee trembles. The foe, alike valiant and veteran, presents no easy conquest nor aught inviting but to those who had consecrated their blood to the public weal. The Omnipotent who allots great enjoyment as the meed of great exertion, had ordained that America should be free, but that she should learn to value the blessing by the price of its acquisition. She shall go to a "wealthy place," but her way is "through fire and through water." Many a generous chief must bleed, and many a gallant youth sink at his side, into the surprised grave; the field must be heaped with slain, the purple torrent must roll, ere the angel of peace descend with his olive. It is here, amid devastation, and horror, and death, that Washington must reap his laurels, and engrave his trophies on the shields of immortality. Shall Delaware and Princeton? Shall Monmouth and York? But I may not particularize; far less repeat the tale which babes recite, which poets sing, and Fame has published to a listening world. Every scene of his action was a scene of his triumph. Now he saved the republic by more than Fabian caution; now he avenged her by more than Carthaginian fierceness; while at every stroke her forests and her hills re-echoed to her shout, "The sword of the LORD and of WASHINGTON!" Nor

was this the vain applause of partiality and enthusiasm. The blasted schemes of Britain, her broken and her captive hosts, proclaimed the terror of his arms. Skilled were her chiefs, and brave her legions; but bravery and skill rendered them a conquest more worthy of Washington. True, he suffered in his turn repulse, and even defeat. It was both natural and needful. Unchequered with reverse, his story would have resembled rather the fictions of romance than the truth of narrative: and had he been neither defeated nor repulsed, we had never seen all the grandeur of his soul. He arrayed himself in fresh honors by that which ruins even the great—vicissitude. He could not only subdue an enemy, but, what is infinitely more, he could subdue misfortune. With an equanimity which gave temperance to victory, and cheerfulness to disaster, he balanced the fortunes of the state. In the face of hostile prowess; in the midst of mutiny and treason; surrounded with astonishment, irresolution, and despondence; Washington remained erect, unmoved, invincible. Whatever ills America might endure in maintaining her rights, she exulted that she had nothing to fear from her commander-in-chief. The event justified her most sanguine presages. That invisible hand which girded him at first, continued to guard and to guide him through the successive stages of the revolution. Nor did he account it a weakness to

bend the knee in homage to its supremacy, and prayer for its direction. This was the armor of Washington; this the salvation of his country.

The hope of her reduction at length abandoned; her war of liberty brought, in the establishment of independance, to that honorable conclusion for which it had been undertaken; the hour arrived when he was to resign the trust which he had accepted with diffidence. To a mind less pure and elevated, the situation of America would have furnished the pretext as well as the means of military usurpation. Talents equal to daring enterprise; the derangement of public affairs; unbounded popularity; and the devotion of a suffering army, would have been to every other a strong, and to almost any other an irresistible temptation. In Washington they did not produce even the pain of self-denial. They added the last proof of his disinterestedness, and imposed on his country the last obligation to gratitude. Impenetrable by corrupting influence; deaf to honest but erring solicitation; irreconcilable with every disloyal sentiment; he urged the necessity, and set the example, of laying down in peace arms assumed for the common defence. But to separate from the companions of his danger and his glory was, even for Washington, a difficult task. About to leave them forever, a thousand sensations rushed upon his heart,, and all the soldier melted in the man. He,

who has no tenderness, has no magnanimity. Washington could vanquish, and Washington could weep. Never was affection more cordially reciprocated. The grasped hand; the silent anguish; the spontaneous tear trickling down the scarred cheek; the wistful look, as he passed, after the warrior who should never again point their way to victory—form a scene for nature's painter and for nature's bard.

But we must not lose, in our sensibility, the remembrance of his penetration, his prudence, his regard of public honor and of public faith. Abhorring outrage; jealous for the reputation, and dreading the excesses, of even a gallant army, flushed with conquest, prompted by incendiaries, and sheltered by a semblance of right, his last act of authority is to dismiss them to their homes without entering the capital. Accompanied with a handful of troops, he repairs to the council of the states, and through them surrenders to his country the sword which he had drawn in her defence. Singular phenomenon! WASHINGTON becomes a private citizen. He exchanges supreme command for the tranquillity of domestic life. Go, incomparable man! to adorn no less the civic virtues than the splendid achievements of the field. Go, rich in the consciousness of thy high deserts. Go, with the admiration of the world, with the plaudit

of millions, and the orisons of millions more for thy temporal and thine eternal bliss!

The glory of Washington seemed now complete. While the universal voice proclaimed that he might decline with honor every future burden, it was a wish and an opinion, almost as universal, that he would not jeopard the fame which he had so nobly won. Had personal considerations swayed his mind, this would have been his own decision. But, untutored in the philosophism of the age, he had not learned to separate the maxims of wisdom from the injunctions of duty. His soul was not debased by that moral cowardice which fears to risk popularity for the general good. Having assisted in the formation of an efficient government which he had refused to dictate or enforce at the mouth of his cannon, he was ready to contribute the weight of his character to insure its effect; and his country rejoiced in an opportunity of testifying that, much as she loved and trusted others, she still loved and trusted him most. Hailed by her unanimous suffrage the pilot of the state, he approaches the awful helm, and grasping it with equal firmness and ease, demonstrates that *forms* of power cause no embarrassment to him.

In so novel an experiment as a nation framing a government for herself under no impulse but that of reason, adopting it through no force but the force of conviction, and putting it into ope-

ration without bloodshed or violence, it was all important that her first magistrate should possess her unbounded good will. Those elements of discord which lurked in the diversity of local interest; in the collision of political theories; in the irritations of party; in the disappointed or gratified ambition of individuals; and which, notwithstanding her graceful transition, threatened the harmony of America, it was for Washington alone to control and repress. His tried integrity, his ardent patriotism, were instead of a volume of arguments for the excellence of that system which he approved and supported. Among the simple and honest whom no artifice was omitted to ensnare, there were thousands who knew little of the philosophy of government, and less of the nice machinery of the constitution; but they knew that Washington was wise and good; they knew it was impossible that *he* should betray them; and by this they were rescued from the fangs of faction. Ages will not furnish so instructive a comment on that cardinal virtue of republicans, confidence in the men of their choice; nor a more salutary antidote against the pestilential principle, that the soul of a republic is jealousy. At the commencement of her federal government, mistrust would have ruined America; in confidence she found her safety.

The re-appearance of Washington as a statesman excited the conjecture of the old world, and

the anxiety of the new. His martial fame had fixed a criterion, however inaccurate, of his civil administration. Military genius does neither confer nor imply political ability. Whatever merit may be attached to the faculty of arranging the principles, and prosecuting the details, of an army, it must be conceded that vaster comprehensions belong to the statesman. Ignorance, vanity, the love of paradox, and the love of mischief, affecting to sneer at the "mystery of government," have indeed taught that common sense and common honesty are his only requisites. The nature of things and the experience of every people, in every age, teach a different doctrine. America had multitudes who possessed both those qualities, but she had only one WASHINGTON. To adjust, in the best compromise, a thousand interfering views, so as to affect the greatest good of the whole with the least inconvenience to the parts; to curb the dragon of faction by means which insure the safety of public liberty; to marshal opinion and prejudice among the auxiliaries of the law; in fine, to touch the main-spring of national agency, so as to preserve the equipoise of its powers, and to make the feeblest movement of the extremities accord with the impulse at the centre, is only for genius of the highest order. To excel equally in military and political science has been the praise of a few chosen

spirits, among whom, with a proud preference, we enrol the Father of our country.

It was the fortune of Washington to direct transactions of which the repetition is hardly within the limits of human possibilities. When he entered on his first presidency, all the interests of the continent were vibrating through the arch of political uncertainty. The departments of the new government were to be marked out and filled up; foreign relations to be regulated; the physical and moral strength of the nation to be organized; and that at a time when scepticism in politics, no less than in religion and morals, was preparing throughout Europe to spring the mine of revolution and ruin. In discharging his first duties, that same intelligent, cautious, resolute procedure, which had rendered him the bulwark of war, now exhibited him as the guardian of peace. Appropriation of talent to employment, is one of the deep results of political sagacity. And in his selection of men for office, Washington displayed a knowledge of character and business, a contempt of favoritism, and a devotion to the public welfare, which permitted the *General* to be rivaled only by the *President*.

Under such auspices, the fruit and the pledge of divine blessing, America rears her head and recovers her vigors. Agriculture laughs on the land: Commerce ploughs the wave: Peace re-

joices at her home; and she grows into respect abroad. Ah! too happy to progress without interruption. The explosions of Europe bring new vexations to her, and new trials and new glories to her Washington. Vigilant and faithful, he hears the tempest roar from afar, warns her of its approach, and prepares for averting its dangers. Black are the heavens and angry the billows, and narrow and perilous the passage. But his composure, dignity, and firmness, are equal to the peril. Unseduced by fraud; unterrified by threat; unawed by clamor; he holds on his steady way, and again he saves his country. With less decision on the part of Washington, a generous but mistaken ardor would have plunged her into the whirlpool, and left her till this hour the sport of the contending elements. Americans! bow to that magnanimous policy which protected your dearest interests at the hazard of incurring your displeasure. It was thus that Washington proved himself, not in the cant of the day, but in the procurement of substantial good, in stepping between them and perdition, the servant of the people. The historian of this period will have to record a revolt raised by infatuation against the law of the land. He will have to record the necessity which compelled even WASHINGTON to suppress it by the sword. But he will have to record also his gentleness and his lenity. Deeds

of severity were his sad tribute to justice ; deeds of humanity the native suggestions of his heart.

Eight years of glorious administration created a claim on the indulgence of his country, which none could think of disputing, but which all lamented should be urged. The ends which rendered his services indispensable being mostly attained, he demands his restoration to private life. Resigning to an able successor the reins which he had guided with characteristic felicity, he once more bids adieu to public honors. Let not his motives be mistaken or forgotten. It was for him to set as great examples in the relinquishment, as in the acceptance of power. No mortified ambition ; no haughty disgusts ; no expectation of higher office ; prompted his retreat. He knew that foreign nations considered his life as the bond, and his influence as the vital spirit, of our union. He knew that his own lustre threw a shade over others, not more injurious to them than to his country. He wished to dispel the enchantment of his own name. He wished to relieve the apprehensions of America, by making her sensible of her riches in other patriots ; to be a spectator of her prosperity under their management ; and to convince herself, and to convince the world, that she depended less on him than either her enemies or her friends believed ; and therefore he withdrew.

Having lavished all her honors, his country had nothing more to bestow upon him except her blessing. But he had more to bestow upon his country. His views and his advice, the condensed wisdom of all his reflection, observation, and experience, he delivers to his compatriots in a manual worthy of them to study and of him to compose. And now, when they could hope to enjoy only the satisfaction of still possessing him, the pleasure of recounting his acts, and the benefit of practising his lessons, they accompany his retirement with their aspirations that his evening may be as serene as his morning had been fair, and his noon resplendent.

That he should ever again endure the solitudes of office was rather to be deprecated than desired; because it must be a crisis singularly portentous which could justify another invasion of his repose. From such a necessity we fondly promised ourselves exemption. Flattering, fallacious security! The sudden whirlwind springs out of a calm. The revolutions of a day proclaim that an empire was. However remote the position of America; however peaceful her character; however cautious and equitable her policy; she was not to go unmolested by the gigantic fiend of Gallic domination. That she was free and happy, was crime and provocation enough. He fastened on her his murderous eye; he was preparing for her that

deadly embrace in which nations supine and credulous had already perished. Reduced to the alternative of swelling the catalogue of his victims, or arguing her cause with the bayonet and the ball, she burst the ill-fated bonds which had linked her to his destinies, and assumes the tone and attitude of defiance. The gauntlet is cast. To press on is perilous; to retreat destruction. She looks wistfully round, and calls for WASHINGTON. The well-known voice, that voice which he had ever accounted a law, pierces the retreats of Vernon, and thrills his bosom. Domestic enjoyments lose their charm; repose becomes to him inglorious; every sacrifice is cheap, and every exertion easy, when his beloved country requires his aid. With all the alacrity of youth he flies to her succor. The helmet of war presses his silver locks. His sword, which dishonor had never tarnished nor corruption poisoned, he once more unsheathes, and prepares to receive on its point the insolence of that foe whose intrigue he had foiled by his wisdom.

It must ever be difficult to compare the merits of Washington's characters, because he always appeared greatest in that which he last sustained. Yet if there is a preference, it must be assigned to the Lieutenant General of the armies of America. Not because the duties of that station were more arduous than those which he had often performed,

but because it more fully displayed his magnanimity. While others become great by elevation, Washington becomes greater by condescension. Matchless patriot! to stoop, on public motives, to an inferior appointment, after possessing and dignifying the highest offices! Thrice favored country, which boasts of such a citizen! We gaze with astonishment; we exult that we are Americans. We augur every thing great, and good, and happy. But whence this sudden horror? What means that cry of agony? Oh! 'tis the shriek of America! The fairy vision is fled: WASHINGTON is—no more!

How are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war perished!

Daughters of America, who erst prepared the festal bower and the laurel wreath, plant now the cypress grove, and water it with tears.

How are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war perished!

The death of WASHINGTON, Americans, has revealed the extent of our loss. It has given us the final proof that we never mistook him. Take his affecting testament, and read the secrets of his soul. Read all the power of domestic virtue. Read his strong love of letters and of liberty. Read his fidelity to republican principle, and his jealousy of national character. Read his devotedness to you in his military bequests to near rela-

tions. "These swords," they are the words of Washington, "these swords are accompanied with an injunction not to unsheath them for the purpose of shedding blood, except it be for self-defence, or in defence of their country and its rights; and in the latter case to keep them unsheathed, and prefer falling with them in their hands, to the relinquishment thereof."

In his acts, Americans, you have seen the man. In the complicated excellence of character he stands alone. Let no future Plutarch attempt the iniquity of parallel. Let no soldier of fortune; let no usurping conqueror; let not Alexander or Cæsar; let not Cromwell or Bonaparte; let none among the dead or the living; appear in the same picture with WASHINGTON; or let them appear as the shade to his light.

On this subject, my countrymen, it is for others to speculate, but it is for us to feel. Yet in proportion to the severity of the stroke, ought to be our thankfulness that it was not inflicted sooner. Through a long series of years, has God preserved our Washington a public blessing; and now that he has removed him forever, shall we presume to say, *What doest thou?* Never did the tomb preach more powerfully the dependence of all things on the will of the Most High. The greatest of mortals crumble into dust the moment he commands, *Return, ye children of men.* Washington was but

the instrument of a benignant God. He sickens, he dies, that we may learn not to *trust in men*, nor to *make flesh our arm*. But though Washington is dead, Jehovah lives. God of our fathers! be our God, and the God of our children! Thou art our refuge and our hope; the pillar of our strength; the wall of our defence, and our unfading glory.

Americans! This God, who raised up Washington and gave you liberty, exacts from you the duty of cherishing it with a zeal according to knowledge. Never sully by apathy or by outrage, your fair inheritance. Risk not, for one moment, on visionary theories, the solid blessings of your lot. To you, particularly, O youth of America! applies the solemn charge. In all the perils of your country remember Washington. The freedom of reason and of right has been handed down to you on the point of the hero's sword. Guard with veneration the sacred deposit. The curse of ages will rest upon you, O youth of America, if ever you surrender to foreign ambition or domestic lawlessness, the precious liberties for which Washington fought, and your fathers bled.

I cannot part with you, fellow-citizens, without urging the long remembrance of our present assembly. This day we wipe away the reproach of republics, that they know not how to be grate-

ful. In your treatment of living patriots, recall your love and your regret of WASHINGTON. Let not future inconsistency charge this day with hypocrisy. Happy America, if she gives an instance of universal principle in her sorrows for the man, "first in war, first in peace, and first in the affections of his country!"

AN ORATION,

COMMEMORATIVE OF THE LATE

MAJ. GEN. ALEXANDER HAMILTON;

PRONOUNCED BEFORE THE

NEW YORK STATE SOCIETY OF THE CINCINNATI,

ON TUESDAY, THE 31ST JULY, 1804.

FUNERAL ORATION.

SAD, my fellow-citizens, are the recollections and forebodings which the present solemnities force upon the mind. Five years have not elapsed since your tears flowed for the Father of your country, and you are again assembled to shed them over her eldest son. No, it is not an illusion—would to God it were: your eyes behold it: the urn which bore the ashes of WASHINGTON is followed by the urn which bears the ashes of HAMILTON. Cruel privation!—but I forbear. *God's way is in the sea, and his path in the great waters, and his footsteps are not known.* It is not for mortals to repine, much less to arraign. Our HAMILTON is removed; and we have nothing left but to recall his image; to gather up his maxims, and to profit by our affliction. Accompany me, therefore, to a short retrospect. I feel that I shall not justify an appointment too imposing to be declined. Your own hearts must supply my deficiency. I aspire to nothing

more than a faint outline of the man whom you loved.

Presages of his future eminence were evolved by the first buddings of intellect in ALEXANDER HAMILTON. The course of the boy, like that of the man, was ardent, rapid, and beyond the reach of his contemporaries. History will hereafter relate that he was numbered among statesmen at an age when in others the rudiments of character are scarcely visible. In the contest with Great Britain, which called forth every talent and every passion, his juvenile pen asserted the claims of the colonies against writers from whom it would derogate to say that they were merely respectable. An unknown antagonist, whose thrust was neither to be repelled nor parried, excited inquiry ; and when he began to be discovered, the effect was apparently so disproportioned to the cause, that his papers were ascribed to a statesman who then held a happy sway in the councils of his country, who has since rendered her the most essential services ; and who still lives to adorn her name.* But the truth could not long be concealed. The powers of HAMILTON created their own evidence ; and America saw, with astonishment, a lad of seventeen in the rank of her advocates, at a time when her advocates were patriots and sages. A distinction thus nobly acquired, and ably maintained, was

* John Jay, Esq.

a pledge to the commonwealth, which he lost no time in redeeming. His first step from the college was into a military post ; his second into the family and confidence of WASHINGTON. Here he had opportunities of studying a man, from whom no other man was too great to learn ; of analyzing those rare qualities which met in his character ; and of nourishing his own magnanimity by free communication with the magnanimity of his chief. His sound understanding, his comprehensive views, his promptitude, application, and patience, would have endeared him to a man less discriminating than WASHINGTON ; but to him they were inestimable, and they speedily sunk the patron in the friend. The pair became inseparable. While others were indulging in wonted gaiety, they were closeted on matters of state ; and the pensive brow of the youth, was often the first intimation of serious design in the veteran.

It was impossible for such a pupil in such a school, not to be conspicuous. The materials furnished by WASHINGTON's experience, by his consummate prudence, by the disclosure of his plans, and of the springs of national operations, fostered the genius of HAMILTON, and fitted him for command. His agency in the correspondence of the commander-in-chief, and in directing the movements of the army, is for the research of his biographer. I pass over his personal valor, not only

because it never was disputed, but because the possession of it, as being one of the most common of military attributes, is not so much the praise of a soldier, as the want of it is his infamy. But be it remembered with pride, that he was as humane as he was brave. He knew how to storm an enemy's intrenchments, but not how to sacrifice a suppliant. His gentleness assuaged martial rigor; nor was his sword polluted by a drop of blood wantonly or carelessly shed.

The capture of Lord Cornwallis having secured our independence, there was nothing to protract the war, but a few measures proper to save appearances, and to prepare for acceding, with decorum, to preliminaries of peace. It became, of course, a subject of solicitude to reflecting young men who had no profession but that of arms, how they should procure an honorable subsistence, and be useful to the community, when that profession should be superseded. Among these was HAMILTON. Encumbered with a family, destitute of funds, and having no inducement to continue in the army, he sheathed his sword, and at the age of twenty-five, applied to the study of the law.

To most men, sudden alterations of habit are seldom advantageous, often ruinous. HAMILTON they did but introduce to an acquaintance with his own inexhaustible mind. Hardly had he exchanged the camp for the bar, when he burst forth

in the lustre of a civilian; and gave a promise which he more than fulfilled, of excelling in jurisprudence, as he had excelled in war.

But it was not for HAMILTON to detach his private pursuits from the public welfare. Scenes were about to open in which it would need his resource and his energy. The war of independence had terminated gloriously; the states had risen to their natural position; their career of prosperity had commenced, but their struggles were not over. Resentments, jealousies, and the farce of an advising government, kept them in jeopardy. That foresight, moderation, and firmness; that comprehension of the public interest, and of the means of promoting it; that zeal, and vigilance, and integrity, which were indispensable to our safety, the inspiration of God had assembled in the soul of HAMILTON. To many who now hear me it is familiar, that after the conclusion of peace, some of our citizens, impelled by their temper, their cupidity, or both, were meditating violence against the property and persons of all who had remained in this city during the war. The generous HAMILTON revolted. No consideration of private friendship or hazard, could prevail with him to connive at faithlessness and revenge. He remonstrated against a scheme of which the policy was as false as the spirit was malignant. His voice was authority, for it was honor and truth.

The public listened, and the infatuation was at an end.*

To these agitations succeeded a more perplexing difficulty. The confederation, framed under the pressure of common danger, proved unequal to its object whenever that pressure was removed. Thirteen republics, with an internal organization which commanded their whole moral and physical force; connected by a fictitious tie under a head without a single effective power, afforded a spectacle of which it is hard to say, whether it was more ludicrous or melancholy. Such a condition of things could not last. The very first occurrence which should put the will of congress at issue with the will of one of the larger states, would have dissolved the phantom; and shown America to be, what the discerning at home and abroad already perceived her to be in theory, a nation; in fact, a number of rival and hostile sovereignties. The evils to be apprehended from such a conflict were alarming; and they were approaching with no less certainty, than it is certain that the principles of human action are not to be altered, nor suspended by compact. The failure of a request from Congress for permission to levy a small duty upon

* On this subject it would be less a compliment to mention, than an injury to omit, the name of his excellency George Clinton, Esq., then governor of the state; whose honorable, independent, and successful exertions to restrain our citizens, cannot be remembered but with respect and veneration.

imports, was hastening a crisis which the mighty mind of HAMILTON proposed to avert. With the express intention of making an effort to retrieve our affairs by establishing an efficient general government, did he consent to be nominated as a candidate for the legislature of this state. The design was magnanimous. It embraced the only expedient to prevent our ruin; but it was confided to a few chosen friends. For such was the national inexperience, and the popular jealousy, that the least suspicion of his purpose would have blasted his reputation as an enemy to freedom. Oh, HAMILTON! equally pure and disinterested were all thy plans, though often misunderstood and calumniated! And now, when there is no more room for suspicion, let his country, in judging of them, not forget, that the very measure which, at first she would bitterly have execrated, has been her salvation. Yes, it is indubitable, that the original germ out of which has grown up her unexampled prosperity, was in the bosom of HAMILTON. From the abortive attempt of Congress already mentioned, proceeded a commercial convention; and to the report of that body, which, as he foresaw, was unable to extricate the nation, do we owe the federal convention. Here, Americans, was the constellation of your heroes and your statesmen. Here your WASHINGTON presided, and your HAMILTON shone. What weight the first of

these names added to everything which received its sanction, and what a conciliating charm it diffused through the states, you need not to be informed. But you ought not to be ignorant, that the benefit arising from the signature of WASHINGTON substantiates a claim on your gratitude to HAMILTON; as it was the advice of the latter previously consulted, which persuaded the former to accept a seat in the convention. A prudent secrecy covers the transactions of that august assembly. But could the veil be drawn aside, you would hear the youth of thirty, fascinating with his eloquence, the collective wisdom of the states, and instructing the hoary patriot in the recondite science of government. You would observe all the emotions of his manly heart, occupying, in turn, his expressive features; and see, through the window in his breast, every anxiety, every impulse, every thought, directed to your happiness. The result is in your hands; it is in your national existence. Not such indeed, as HAMILTON wished, but such as he could obtain, and as the states would ratify, is the federal constitution. His ideas of a government which should elevate the character, preserve the unity and perpetuate the liberties of America, went beyond the provisions of that instrument. Accustomed to view men as they are; and to judge of what they will be, from what they ever have been, he distrusted any political order which admits the

baneful charity of supposing them to be what they ought to be. He knew how averse they are from even wholesome restraint ; how obsequious to flattery, how easily deceived by misrepresentation ; how partial, how vehement, how capricious. He knew that vanity, the love of distinction, is inseparable from man ; that if it be not turned into a channel useful to the government, it will force a channel for itself ; and if cut off from other egress, will issue in the most corrupt of all aristocracies—the aristocracy of money. He knew that an extensive territory, a progressive population, an expanding commerce, diversified climate, and soil, and manners, and interest, must generate faction ; must interfere with foreign views, and present emergencies requiring, in the general organization, much tone and promptitude. A strong government, therefore, that is, a government stable and vigorous, adequate to all the forms of national exigency, and furnished with the principles of self-preservation, was undoubtedly his preference ; and he preferred it because he conscientiously believed it to be necessary. A system which he would have entirely approved, would probably keep in their places those little men who aspire to be great ; would withdraw much fuel from the passions of the multitude ; would diminish the materials which the worthless employ for their own aggrandizement ; would crown peace at home with

respectability abroad; but would never infringe the liberty of an honest man. From his profound acquaintance with mankind, and his devotion to all that good society holds dear, sprang his apprehensions for the existing constitution. Convinced that the natural tendency of things is to an encroachment by the states on the union; that their encroachments will be formidable as they augment their wealth and population; and, consequently, that the vigor of the general government will be impaired in a very near proportion with the increase of its difficulties; he anticipated the day when it should perish in the conflict of local interest and of local pride. The divine mercy grant that his prediction may not be verified!

But whatever fears he entertained for the ultimate safety of the federal constitution, it is, in every respect, so preferable to the old confederation, and its rejection would have been so extremely hazardous, that he exerted all his talents and influence in its support. In the papers signed *PUBLIUS*, which compress the experience of ages, and pour original light on the science of government, his genius has left a manual for the future statesman. And they will be read with deeper interest when it is considered that, eloquent and powerful as they are, they were written under the pressure of business, amidst the conversation of friends, and the interrogatories of clients. Alas!

the spirit which dictated them is fled; the hand which penned them moulders in death!

His voice co-operated with his pen. In the convention of this state, which met to deliberate on the federal constitution, he was always heard with awe, perhaps with conviction, though not always with success. But when the crisis arrived—when a vote was to determine whether New York should retain or relinquish her place in the union; and preceding occurrences made it probable that she would choose the worst part of the alternative, HAMILTON arose in redoubled strength. He argued, he remonstrated, he entreated, he warned, he painted, till apathy itself was moved, and the most relentless of human things, a preconcerted majority, was staggered and broken. Truth was again victorious, and New York enrolled herself under the federal standard.

The government happily erected, was now to be organized. Every eye fixed upon WASHINGTON for the first magistrate. He knew it, and hesitated. The competition between his love of retirement, his former resolutions, and the new state of affairs, held him in painful suspense. But the judgment of HAMILTON preponderated, and he yielded to the public wish.

That faithful adviser, whom he had consulted upon every question of moment, and who never gave him an unsound advice, could not be omitted

in the original administration. The department best suited to him, because the most arduous, was the treasury. He had already passed from the warrior into the jurist, and he was now to appear in the new and very different character of a financier. A losing commerce, a famished agriculture, an empty purse, and prostrate credit, would have overwhelmed the ordinary man; but they only brought into action the resources of HAMILTON. His plans for redeeming the reputation of the country, by satisfying her creditors; and for combining with the government such a moneyed interest as might facilitate its operations, were strenuously opposed. But as it is easier to cavil than to refute, to complain than to amend, the opposition failed. The effect was electrical. Commerce revived; the ploughshare glittered; property recovered its value; credit was established; revenue created; the treasury filled.

This great fiscal revolution enriched numbers who held a large amount of the public paper, purchased at a season when the unpromising state of the public faith had set it afloat in the market at a most ignoble price. None could have fairer opportunities of acquiring a princely fortune, than the financier himself. So inviting was the occasion, and the disposition to profit by it so little at variance with the common estimate of honorable gain, that few supposed it possible to resist the tempta-

tion. The fact being presumed, every petty politician erected himself into a critic; while the gazettes, the streets, the polls of election, resounded with the millions amassed by the secretary. It is natural that the idolators of gold should treat the contempt of it as a chimera; but gold was not the idol of HAMILTON. He had formerly relinquished his own claims to compensation for military services, that obloquy might not breathe an impeachment of his motives in espousing the claims of his brother officers.* And from this proud eminence which he then ascended, he was not now to be seduced by the attractions of lucre. Exquisitely delicate toward official character, he touched none of the advantages which he put within the reach of others; he vested not a dollar in the public funds.

Although his particular province was the trea-

* Being a member of congress, while the question of the commutation of the half-pay of the army for a sum in gross was in debate, delicacy, and a desire to be useful to the army, by removing the idea of his having an interest in the question, induced him to write to the secretary of war, and relinquish his claim to half-pay; which, or the equivalent, he accordingly never received. Neither did he ever apply for the lands allowed by the United States to officers of his rank. It is true, that having served through the latter periods of the war on the general staff of the United States, and not in the line of this state, he could not claim the allowance as a matter of course. But having before the war resided in this state, and having entered the military career at the head of a company of artillery raised for the particular defence of this state, he had better pretensions to the allowance than others to whom it was actually made. Yet has it not been extended to him.

sury, his genius pervaded the whole administration; and in those critical events which crowded each other, had a peculiar influence upon its measures. The French Revolution, which our fondness mistook for the birth of virtuous freedom, stood before him, from the beginning, in that hideous form which it has since unmasked. Not to be duped by hollow pretences, he was active in arresting the course of an insolent minister; and not to be biased by popular frenzy, he secured that dignified ground to which the United States were led by the proclamation of neutrality. Without his aid, great WASHINGTON himself might have been borne down by the torrent, and the nation implicated in war, to gratify the resentment and ambition of France.

Internal embarrassment soon added fresh honors to HAMILTON as a statesman. The western insurrection, which had rejected the condescending proposals of government, was to be quelled by force. A more serious question had not occupied the cabinet, as nothing had hitherto occurred to try the strength of the national arm. It was now to be ascertained how far the turbulent might trifle with the law, and what reliance they might place upon armed opposition. Incalculable consequences hung upon the precedent. Feeble measures would have surrendered the peace, perhaps the life, of the union; but feeble measures were con-

templated. That timidity which shrinks from decision; that economy which accounts everything less precious than money; and that covert treason which favored the rebellion, would have ordered out a detachment that might have been met and defeated.

The penetration of Hamilton was not to be eluded, nor his firmness to be shaken, by any argument in support of so dangerous an experiment. "If you wish," said he, "to maintain the authority of the laws; to prevent the repetition of similar outrages; to spare your treasure and your blood; let the insurgents, let the continent see, that it is never to admit of a doubt whether the national will shall be obeyed or not. Teach them this lesson by employing a force that shall put resistance out of the question." This sage and humane policy was adopted by WASHINGTON; and the rebellion disappeared without effusion of blood.

After the restoration of order, Mr. HAMILTON remained but a short time in office. His numerous services gave him, perhaps, a right to retire when the state might be safely intrusted to other hands. But one reason of his retreat deserves particular notice, because it involves a mischievous and disreputable principle. A general error in popular systems, is a frugality which computes nothing but pence. The affairs of a nation, how-

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ever, cannot be ably conducted without able and independent men. But such men, in a country where the demand for active talent is greater than the supply, will always hold their fortunes in their own hand: nor are we to expect that they will submit to the toils and responsibility of public office, with a support utterly disproportioned both to their station and their means of providing for themselves. No people is in jeopardy from the liberality of their civil list; but when this is niggardly, able men withdraw in succession, and the state falls at length into the hands of the weak or the wicked, whose want of capacity or of integrity, squanders on one occasion the public revenue, and on another overloads it with the expenses of war. The last of these consequences God forbid we should experience; the first was exemplified in the history of HAMILTON. He entered into public service with property of his own, the well earned reward of professional talent; he continued in it, till his little funds were dissipated; and left it, to get bread for a suffering family. It was surely enough that he had impoverished himself while he was enriching the commonwealth; but it was beyond measure insulting to charge him, under such circumstances, with invading the public purse. Nobody believed the charge; and least of all, the slanderers who brought it. But WASHINGTON was vilified, and how should HAMILTON

escape! The virtuous saw with regret that he stooped to repel it, and with anguish that in regard to a private aberration, his defence contained a disclosure of which they admired the ingenuousness, but deplored the occasion, while they wept over a spot in a blaze of excellence.

Large and lucrative practice at the bar, promised to replace his pecuniary sacrifices in official life. But a new distress of his country drew him again from his professional engagements. Our remonstrances against the injuries committed by France, had proved unavailing; and her rude and humiliating requisitions had fired the national spirit. Little was to be expected from the generosity, and less from the rectitude, of a government framed upon the maxims of the new philosophy. Tribute or the sword was the only choice of the states, and it would have been a libel on the war of independence to have hesitated a moment. A provisional army, with WASHINGTON at their head, was summoned into the field; but the condition on which he suspended the acceptance of his own commission was, that HAMILTON should be his associate. The end of this stipulation could not be misunderstood. He not only designed to have his age relieved from some heavy cares by his younger friend, but, in the event of his own decease, to leave the sword of America in the hands of a man whom

nothing could overreach, nothing intimidate, nothing corrupt.

Subsequent adjustment of our dispute with the French Republic, was accompanied with the discharge of the provisional army, and with HAMILTON's second return to his profession. Here, unwearied in diligence, and unrivalled in fame, he filled up the residue (ah, too transient!) of his invaluable days. But, as you have truly been told, though he had withdrawn from public life, he was not an hour absent from the public service. It did not belong to a man absorbed in his country's welfare, to look with indifference on the course of her affairs. Office he wanted none. None in the gift of the nation would have moved him from his purpose. He reserved himself for crises which he feared are approaching; such crises, especially, as may affect the integrity of the union. How he was alarmed by everything which pointed at its dissolution; how indignant were his feelings and language on that ungracious topic; how stern and steady his hostility to every influence which only leaned toward the project, they will attest with whom he was in habits of communication. In every shape, it encountered his reprobation as unworthy of a statesman, as fatal to America, and desirable to the desperate alone. One of his primary objects was to consolidate the efforts of good men in retarding a calamity which, after all, they

may be unable to avert; but which no partial nor temporary policy should induce them to accelerate. To these sentiments must be traced his hatred to continental factions; his anxiety for the federal constitution, although, in his judgment, too slight for the pressure which it has to sustain; his horror of every attempt to sap its foundation, or loosen its fabric; his zeal to consecrate it in the affections of his fellow-citizens, that if it fall at last, they may be pure from the guilt of its overthrow—an overthrow, which may be accomplished in an hour, but of which the woes may be entailed upon ages to come.

With such dignified policy he joined the most intense application to his professional duties. But the description of these is not my province. How he resolved the most intricate cases; how he pursued general principles through their various modifications; how he opened the fountains of justice; how he revered the rights of property; how he signalized himself in protecting the defenceless; how judges, and jurors, and counsel, and audience, hung on his accents, let them declare who have intrusted their fortunes to his hand; let them declare who have wondered that any man should be thought great while HAMILTON appeared at the American bar.

But enumerations were endless. He was born to be great. Whoever was second, HAMILTON

must be first. To his stupendous and versatile mind no investigation was difficult—no subject presented which he did not illuminate. Superiority, in some particular, belongs to thousands. Pre-eminence, in whatever he chose to undertake, was the prerogative of HAMILTON. No fixed criterion could be applied to his talents. Often has their display been supposed to have reached the limit of human effort; and the judgment stood firm till set aside by himself. When a cause of new magnitude required new exertion, he rose, he towered, he soared; surpassing himself as he surpassed others. Then was nature tributary to his eloquence! Then was felt his despotism over the heart! Touching, at his pleasure, every string of pity or terror, of indignation or grief; he melted, he soothed, he roused, he agitated; alternately gentle as the dews, and awful as the thunder. Yet, great as he was in the eyes of the world, he was greater in the eyes of those with whom he was most conversant. The greatness of most men, like objects seen through a mist, diminishes with the distance: but HAMILTON, like a tower seen afar off under a clear sky, rose in grandeur and sublimity with every step of approach. Familiarity with him was the parent of veneration. Over these matchless talents, probity threw her brightest lustre. Frankness, suavity, tenderness, benevolence, breathed through their exercise. And to his family!—

but he is gone ;—that noble heart beats no more ; that eye of fire is dimmed ; and sealed are those oracular lips. Americans, the serenest beam of your glory is extinguished in the tomb.

Fathers, friends, countrymen ! the death of HAMILTON is no common affliction. The loss of distinguished men is at all times a calamity ; but the loss of such a man, at such a time, and in the very meridian of his usefulness, is singularly portentous. When WASHINGTON was taken, HAMILTON was left ; but HAMILTON is taken, and we have no WASHINGTON. We have not such another man to die. WASHINGTON and HAMILTON in five years ! Bereaved America ! Thou art languishing beneath the divine displeasure. Let this truth awfully impress my hearers, that when the Almighty God is about to *shake terribly the earth* ; when he has bidden scourge to follow scourge, and vengeance to press on vengeance, one of his means is to deprive a nation of their ablest men. Thus bereft of counsel, their affairs run into confusion, and bring forth misery. I invent nothing ; I only repeat the admonition of holy writ : *For behold, the Lord, the Lord of hosts, doth take away the mighty man, and the man of war, the judge, and the prophet, and the prudent, and the ancient, the captain of fifty and the honorable man, and the counsellor and the cunning artificer, and the eloquent orator.* The disastrous consequences are, impotent gov-

errors, and ruthless anarchy. For the prophet continues: *I will give children to be their princes, and babes shall rule over them. And the people shall be oppressed, every one by another, and every one by his neighbor; the child shall behave himself proudly against the ancient, and the base against the honorable.*

Fathers, friends, countrymen! the grave of HAMILTON speaks. It charges me to remind you that he fell a victim not to disease or accident; not to the fortune of glorious warfare; but, how shall I utter it? to a custom which has no origin but superstition, no aliment but depravity, no reason but in madness. Alas! that he should thus expose his precious life. This was his error. A thousand bursting hearts reiterate, this *was* his error. Shall I apologize? I am forbidden by his living protestations, by his dying regrets, by his wasted blood. Shall a solitary act into which he was betrayed and dragged, have the authority of a precedent? The plea is precluded by the long decisions of his understanding, by the principles of his conscience, and by the reluctance of his heart. Ah! when will our morals be purified, and an imaginary honor cease to cover the most pestilent of human passions? My appeal is to military men. Your honor is sacred. Listen. Is it honorable to enjoy the esteem of the wise and good? The wise and good turn with disgust from

the man who lawlessly aims at his neighbor's life. Is it honorable to serve your country? That man cruelly injures her, who, from private pique, calls his fellow citizen into the dubious field. Is fidelity honorable? That man forswears his faith, who turns against the bowels of his countrymen, weapons put into his hand for their defence. Are generosity, humanity, sympathy, honorable? That man is superlatively base, who mingles the tears of the widow and orphan, with the blood of a husband and father. Do refinement, and courtesy, and benignity, entwine with the laurels of the brave? The blot is yet to be wiped from the soldier's name, that he cannot treat his brother with the decorum of a gentleman, unless the pistol or the dagger be every moment at his heart. Let the votaries of honor now look at their deeds. Let them compare their doctrine with this horrible comment. Ah! what avails it to a distracted nation that HAMILTON was murdered for a punctilio of honor? My flesh shivers! Is this indeed our state of society? Are transcendent worth and talent to be a capital indictment before the tribunal of ambition? Is the angel of death to record, for sanguinary retribution, every word which the collision of political opinion may extort from a political man? Are integrity and candor to be at the mercy of the assassin? And systematic crime to trample under foot, or smite into the grave, all

that is yet venerable in our humbled land? My countrymen, the land is defiled with blood unrighteously shed. Its cry, disregarded on earth, has gone up to the throne of God; and this day does our punishment reveal our sin. It is time for us to awake. The voice of moral virtue, the voice of domestic alarm, the voice of the fatherless and widow, the voice of a nation's wrong, the voice of HAMILTON'S blood, the voice of impending judgment, calls for a remedy. At this hour, Heaven's high reproof is sounding from Maine to Georgia, and from the shores of the Atlantic to the banks of the Mississippi. If we refuse obedience, every drop of blood spilled in single combat, will lie at our door, and will be recompensed when our cup is full. We have then our choice, either to coerce iniquity, or prepare for desolation; and in the mean time to make our nation, though infant in years, yet mature in vice, the scorn and the abhorrence of civilized man?

Fathers, friends, countrymen! the dying breath of HAMILTON recommended to you the Christian's hope. His single testimony outweighs all the cavils of the sciolist, and all the jeers of the profane. Who will venture to pronounce a fable, that doctrine of *life and immortality*, which his profound and irradiating mind embraced as the truth of God? When you are to die, you will find no source of peace but in the faith of Jesus.

Cultivate for your present repose and your future consolation, what our departed friend declared to be the support of his expiring moments: "A tender reliance on the mercies of the Almighty, through the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ."

HAMILTON! we will cherish thy memory, we will embalm thy fame! Fare thee well, thou unparalleled man, farewell—for ever!

A P P E N D I X.

To the Editor of the Commercial Advertiser.

SIR,

HAVING read, in your paper of the 16th, a very imperfect account of my conversation with General Hamilton, the day previous to his decease, I judge it my duty to lay the following narrative before the public.

On the morning of Wednesday, the 11th inst. shortly after the rumor of the General's injury had created an alarm in the city, a note from Dr. Post informed me that "he was extremely ill at Mr. Wm. Bayard's, and expressed a particular desire to see me as soon as possible." I went immediately. The exchange of melancholy salutation, on entering the General's apartment, was succeeded by a silence which he broke by saying, that he "had been anxious to see me, and have the sacrament administered to him; and that this was still his wish." I replied, that "it gave me unutterable pain to receive from him any request to which I could not accede: that, in the present instance, a compliance was incompatible with all my obligations; as it is a principle in our churches never to administer the Lord's supper privately to any person under any circumstances." He urged me no further. I then remarked to him, that "the holy communion is an exhibition and pledge of the mercies which the Son of God has purchased; that the absence of the sign does not exclude from the mercies signified; which were accessible to him by faith in their gracious Author." "I am aware," said he, "of that. It is only as a sign that I wanted it." A short pause ensued. I resumed the discourse, by observing that "I had nothing to address to him in his affliction, but that same *Gospel of the grace of God*, which it is my office to preach to the most obscure and illiterate: that in the sight of God all men are on a level, as all have sinned, and come short of his glory; and that they must

apply to him for pardon and life, *as sinners*, whose only refuge is in his *grace reigning by righteousness through our Lord Jesus Christ.*" "I perceive it to be so," said he; "I am a sinner: I look to his mercy." I then adverted to "the infinite merit of the Redeemer, as the *propitiation for sin*, the sole ground of our acceptance with God; the sole channel of his favor to us; and cited the following passages of scripture, *There is no other name given under heaven among men, whereby we must be saved, but the name of Jesus. He is able to save them to the uttermost who come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin.*" This last passage introduced the affair of the duel, on which I reminded the General, that he was not to be instructed as to its moral aspect, that *the precious blood of Christ* was as effectual and as necessary to wash away the transgression which had involved him in suffering, as any other transgression; and that he must there, and there alone, seek peace for his conscience, and a hope that should "*not make him ashamed.*" He assented, with strong emotion, to these representations, and declared his abhorrence of the whole transaction. "It was always," added he, "against my principles. I used every expedient to avoid the interview; but I have found, for some time past, that my life *must* be exposed to that man. I went to the field determined not to take *his* life." He repeated his disavowal of all intention to hurt Mr. Burr; the anguish of his mind in recollecting what had passed; and his humble hope of forgiveness from his God. I recurred to the topic of the divine compassions; the freedom of pardon in the Redeemer Jesus to perishing sinners. "That grace, my dear General, which brings salvation, is rich, rich."—"Yes," interrupted he, "it is *rich* grace."—"And on that grace," continued I, "a sinner has the highest encouragement to repose his confidence, because it is tendered to him upon the surest foundation; the scripture testifying that *we have redemption through the blood of Jesus, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace.*" Here the General, letting go my hand, which he had held from the moment I sat down at his bedside, clasped his hands together, and, looking up towards heaven, said, with emphasis, "I *have* a tender reliance on the mercy of the Almighty, through the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ." He replaced his hand in mine, and appearing somewhat

spent, closed his eyes. A little after, he fastened them on me, and I proceeded. "The *simple* truths of the Gospel, my dear sir, which require no abstruse investigation, but faith in the veracity of God who cannot lie, are best suited to your present condition, and they are full of consolation."—"I feel them to be so," replied he. I then repeated these texts of scripture: *It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, and of sinners the chief. I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins. Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.* "This," said he, "is my support. Pray for me."—"Shall I pray with you?"—"Yes." I prayed with him, and heard him whisper as I went along; which I supposed to be his concurrence with the petitions. At the conclusion he said, "Amen. God grant it."

Being about to part with him, I told him, "I had one request to make." He asked "what it was!" I answered, "that whatever might be the issue of his affliction, he would give his testimony against the practice of dueling."—"I will," said he, "I have done it. If *that*," evidently anticipating the event, "if *that* be the issue, you will find it in writing. If it please God that I recover, I shall do it in a manner which will effectually put me out of its reach in future." I mentioned, once more, the importance of renouncing every other dependence for the eternal world, but the mercy of God in Christ Jesus; with a particular reference to the catastrophe of the morning. The General was affected, and said, "Let us not pursue the subject any further, it agitates me." He laid his hands upon his breast, with symptoms of uneasiness, which indicated an increased difficulty of speaking. I then took my leave. He pressed my hand affectionately, and desired to see me again at a proper interval. As I was retiring, he lifted up his hands in the attitude of prayer, and said feebly, "God be merciful to ——." His voice sunk, so that I heard not the rest distinctly, but understood him to quote the words of the publican in the Gospel, and to end the sentence with, "me a sinner."

I saw him, a second time, on the morning of Thursday; but from his appearance, and what I had heard, supposing that he could not

speak without severe effort, I had no conversation with him. I prayed for a moment at his bedside, in company with his overwhelmed family and friends; and for the rest, was one of the mourning spectators of his composure and dignity in suffering. His mind remained in its former state; and he viewed with calmness his approaching dissolution. I left him between twelve and one, and at two, as the public know, he breathed his last.

I am, sir,

With much respect,

Your obedient servant,

J. M. MASON.

NEW YORK, *July 18th*, 1804.

THE
VOICE OF WARNING
TO
CHRISTIANS,
ON
THE ENSUING ELECTION
OF A
PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.

BLOW THE TRUMPET IN ZION.—WHO IS ON THE LORD'S SIDE?

TO CHRISTIANS,
WHO PRIZE A GOOD CONSCIENCE, A CONSISTENT CHARACTER,
AND THE HONOR OF THEIR REDEEMER,
ABOVE ALL PERSONAL AND POLITICAL ATTACHMENTS,
THE FOLLOWING PAMPHLET
IS DEDICATED;
WITH THE SINGLE REQUEST, THAT, LAYING ASIDE PASSION,
THEY WILL GIVE IT SUCH
A CALM, SERIOUS, AND CONSIDERATE PERUSAL,
AS THEY OWE TO AN ARGUMENT RELATIVE TO THE BEST INTERESTS
OF THEMSELVES, THEIR FAMILIES, THEIR COUNTRY,
AND THE CHURCH OF GOD.

New York, September, 1800.

THE
VOICE OF WARNING,
ETC.

IF a manly attempt to avert national ruin, by exposing a favorite error, should excite no resentment, nor draw any obloquy upon its author, there would certainly be a new thing under the sun. Men can seldom bear contradiction. They bear it least when they are most demonstrably wrong; because, having surrendered their judgment to prejudice, or their conscience to design, they must take refuge in obstinacy from the attacks of reason. The bad, dreading nothing so much as the prevalence of pure principle and virtuous habit, will ever be industrious in counteracting it, and the more candid, rational, and convincing the means employed in its behalf, the louder will be their clamor, and the fiercer their opposition. On the other hand, good men are often led insensibly astray, and their very honesty becomes the guaranty of their delusion. Unaware, at first, of their inconsistency,

they afterwards shrink from the test of their own profession. Startled by remonstrance, but unprepared to recede; checked by the misgivings of their own minds, yet urged on by their previous purpose and connection, the conflict renders them irritable, and they mark as their enemy whoever tells them the truth. From the coincidence of such a bias with the views of the profligate and daring, results incalculable mischief. The sympathy of a common cause unites the persons engaged in it; the shades of exterior character gradually disappear; virtue sinks from her glory; vice emerges from her infamy; the best and the basest appear nearly on a level; while the most atrocious principles either lose their horror or have a veil thrown over them; and the man who endeavors to arrest their course is singled out as a victim to revenge and madness. Such, from the beginning, has been the course of the world. None of its benefactors have escaped its calumnies and persecutions; not prophets, not apostles, not the Son of God himself. To this treatment, therefore, must every one be reconciled, who labors to promote the best interests of his country. He must stake his popularity against his integrity; he must encounter a policy which will be contented with nothing short of his ruin; and if it may not spill his blood, will strive to overwhelm him with public execration. That this is the spirit which *has* pur-

sued a writer, the purity of whose views is equalled only by their importance—I mean the author of “*Serious Considerations on the Election of a President*,”—I need not inform any who inspect the gazettes. To lay before the people of the United States proofs that a candidate for the office of their first magistrate is an unbeliever in the Scriptures, and that to confer such a distinction upon an open enemy to their religion, their Redeemer, and their hope, would be mischief to themselves and sin against God, is a crime never to be forgiven by a class of men too numerous for our peace or prosperity. The infidels have risen *en masse*, and it is not through *their* moderation that he retains any portion of his respectability or his usefulness. But in *their* wrath there is nothing to deprecate; nor does he deserve the name of a Christian, who, in order to avoid it, would deviate a hair’s breadth from his duty. For them I write not. Impenetrable by serious principle, they are not objects of expostulation, but of compassion; nor shall I stoop to any solicitude about their censure or applause.

But do I represent as infidels all who befriend Mr. Jefferson’s election? God forbid that I should so “lie against the truth.” If I thought so, I should mourn in silence; my pen should slumber for ever. That a majority of them profess, and that multitudes of them really love, the religion of Jesus, while it is my terror, is also my hope. Terror,

because I believe them to be under a fatal mistake; hope, because they, if any, are within the reach of conviction. I address myself to them. The latter, especially, are my brothers, by dearer ties and higher interests than can be created or destroyed by any political connection. And if it be asked, Why mingle religion with questions of policy? Why irritate by opposition? Why risk the excitement of passions which may dissever but cannot aid, the common Christianity? Why not maintain a prudent reserve, and permit matters of state to take their own course? I answer, because Christians are deeply engaged already; because the principles of the gospel are to regulate their political as well as their other conduct; because their Christian character, profession, and prosperity, are involved in the issue. This is no hour to temporise. I abhor that coward spirit which vaunts when gliding down the tide of opinion, but shrinks from the returning current, and calls the treason *prudence*. It is the voice of God's providence not less than of his own word, "Cry aloud, spare not; lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins." With Christians, therefore, I *must* expostulate; and may not refrain. However they may be displeased, or threaten, I will say with the Athenian chief, "*Strike, but hear me.*"

Fellow Christians,—A crisis of no common mag-

nitude awaits our country. The approaching election of a President, is to decide a question not merely of preference to an eminent individual, or particular views of policy, but, what is infinitely more, of national regard or disregard to the religion of Jesus Christ. Had the choice been between two infidels, or two professed Christians, the point of politics would be untouched by me. Nor, though opposed to Mr. Jefferson, am I to be regarded as a partisan; since the principle which I am about to develope, will be equally unacceptable to many on both sides of the question. I dread the election of Mr. Jefferson, because I believe him to be a confirmed infidel: you desire it, because, while he is politically acceptable, you either doubt this fact, or do not consider it essential. Let us, like brethren, reason this matter.

The general opinion rarely if ever mistakes a character which private pursuits and public functions have placed in different attitudes; yet it is frequently formed upon circumstances which elude the grasp of argument, even while they make a powerful and just impression. Notwithstanding, therefore, the belief of Mr. Jefferson's infidelity, which has for years been uniform and strong, wherever his character has been a subject of speculation; although that infidelity has been boasted by some, lamented by many, and undisputed by all, yet as it is now denied by his friends, the

charge, unsupported by other proof, could hardly be pursued to conviction. Happily for truth and for us, Mr. Jefferson has *written*, he has *printed*. While I shall not decline auxiliary testimony, I appeal to what he never retracted, and will not deny, his *Notes on Virginia*.*

In their war upon revelation, infidels have levelled their batteries against the miraculous *facts* of the Scripture, well knowing that if its historical truth can be overturned, there is an end of its claim to inspiration. But God has protected his word. Particularly the UNIVERSAL DELUGE, the most stupendous miracle of the Old Testament, is fortified with impregnable evidence. The globe teems with demonstrations of it. Every mountain, and hill, and valley, lifts up its voice to confirm the narrative of Moses. The very researches and discoveries of infidels themselves, contrary to their intentions, their wishes, and their hopes, are here compelled to range behind the banner of the Bible. To attack, therefore, the scriptural account of the deluge, belongs only to the most desperate infidelity. Now, what will you think of Mr. Jefferson's Christianity, if he has advanced positions which strike directly at the truth of God's word concerning that wonderful event? Let him speak for himself: "It is said that shells are found in the

* The edition which I use is the second American edition, published at Philadelphia, by Matthew Carey, 1794.

Andes, in South America, fifteen thousand feet above the level of the ocean. This is considered by many, both of the learned and unlearned, *as a proof of an universal deluge*. But to the *many considerations opposing this opinion*, the following may be added: The atmosphere and all its contents, whether of water, air, or other matters, gravitate to the earth; that is to say, they have weight. Experience tells us, that the weight of all these columns together never exceeds that of a column of mercury thirty-one inches high. If the whole contents of the atmosphere, then, were water, instead of what they are, it would cover the *globe but thirty-five feet deep*: but, as these waters, as they fell, would run into the seas, the superficial measure of which is to that of the dry parts of the globe, as two to one, the seas would be raised only fifty-two and a half feet above their present level, and of course would *overflow the land to that height only*. In Virginia this would be a very small proportion even of the champaign country, the banks of our tide-waters being frequently, if not generally, of a greater height. Deluges beyond this extent then, as for instance, to the North Mountain, or to Kentucky, seem out of the laws of nature. But within it they may have taken place to a greater or less degree, in proportion to the combination of natural causes which may be supposed to have produced them. But

such deluges as these will not account for the shells found in the higher lands. A second opinion has been entertained, which is, that in times anterior to the records either of history or tradition, the bed of the ocean, the principal residence of the shelled tribes, has, by some great convulsion of nature, been heaved to the heights at which we now find shells and other remains of marine animals. *The favorers of this opinion do well to suppose the great events on which it rests, to have taken place beyond all the æras of history; for within these certainly none such can be found; and we may venture to say further, that no fact has taken place either in our own days, or in the thousands of years recorded in history, which proves the existence of any natural agents within or without the bowels of the earth, of force sufficient to heave to the height of fifteen thousand feet, such masses as the Andes.** After mentioning another opinion proposed by Voltaire, Mr. J. proceeds: "There is a wonder somewhere. Is it greatest on this branch of the dilemma; on that which supposes the existence of a power of which we have no evidence in any other case; or on the first which requires us to believe the creation of a body of water, and its subsequent annihilation?" Rejecting the whim of Voltaire, he concludes, that "*the three hypotheses are EQUALLY unsatisfac-*

* Jefferson's Notes on Virginia, p. 39-41.

tory, and we must be contented to acknowledge that this great phenomenon is, as yet, unsolved.”*

On these extracts I cannot suppress the following reflections:

1. Mr. Jefferson disbelieves the existence of an universal deluge. “*There are MANY CONSIDERATIONS,*” says he, “*OPPOSING this opinion.*” The Bible says expressly, “*The waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth, and ALL THE HIGH HILLS THAT WERE UNDER THE WHOLE HEAVEN were covered.*”† Mr. Jefferson enters into a philosophical argument to prove the fact impossible; that is, he argues in the very face of God’s word, and, as far as his reasoning goes, endeavors to convict it of falsehood.

2. Mr. Jefferson’s concession of the probability of deluges within certain limits, does not rank him with those great and good men who have supposed the deluge to be partial, because his argument concludes against the Scriptural narrative, even upon that supposition. He will not admit his partial deluges to rise above fifty-two and a half feet above the level of the ocean. Whereas the Scripture, circumscribe its deluge as you will, asserts that *the waters were fifteen cubits* (twenty-seven and a half feet, nearly) *above the mountains.*‡

3. Not satisfied with this argument, Mr. Jeffer-

* Jefferson’s Notes on Virginia, p. 42.

† Gen. vii. 19.

‡ Gen. v. 20.

son sneers at the Scripture itself, and at the credulity of those who, relying upon its testimony, believe "that the bed of the ocean has, by some great convulsion of nature, been heaved to the heights at which we now find shells and other remains of marine animals." "*They do well,*" says he, "*to suppose the great events on which it rests to have taken place beyond all the æras of history ;* FOR WITHIN THESE NONE SUCH ARE TO BE FOUND." Indeed ! And so our faith in God's word is to dwindle, at the touch of a profane philosopher, into an "opinion," unsupported by either "history or tradition ?" *All the fountains of the great deep, saith the Scripture, WERE BROKEN UP.** Was this no "great convulsion of nature ?" Could not this "heave" the bed of the ocean to the height at which we now find shells ? But the favorers of this opinion *suppose the great events on which it rests to have taken place beyond all the æras of history.* And *they do well,* says Mr. Jefferson : the plain meaning of which is, that their error would certainly be detected if they did not retreat into the darkness of fable. Malignant sarcasm ! And who are "the *favorers* of this opinion ?" At least all who embrace the Holy Scriptures. These *do* declare most unequivocally that there was such a "great convulsion of nature" as produced a deluge infinitely more formidable than Mr. Jefferson's phi-

* Gen. vii. 11.

losophy can digest. But he will not so much as allow them to be history: he degrades them even below tradition. We talk of times for our flood, he tells us, "anterior to the records either of history or tradition." Nor will it mend the matter, to urge that he alludes only to profane history. The fact could not be more dubious or less deserving a place in the system of philosophy, from the attestation of infallible truth. And is this truth to be spurned as no *history*; as not even *tradition*? It is thus, Christians, that a man whom you are expected to elevate to the chief magistracy, insults yourselves and your Bible.*

* Nay, as it is only the Scripture which authenticates the popular belief of an universal deluge, Mr. Jefferson's insinuation can hardly have any meaning, if it be not an oblique stroke at the Bible itself. Nothing can be more silly, than the pretext that he shows the insufficiency of *natural* causes to effect the deluge, with a view of supporting the credit of the *miracle*. His difficulty is not to account for the *deluge*: he denies that; but for *the shells on the top of the Andes*. If he believed in the deluge, natural or miraculous, the difficulty would cease: he would say at once, *The flood threw them there*. But as he tells us, "*this great phenomenon is, as yet, unsolved*," it is clear that he does not believe in the deluge at all; for this "solves" his "phenomenon" most effectually. And for whom does Mr. J. write? For Christians? None of them ever dreamed that the deluge was caused by anything else than a miracle. For infidels? Why then does he not tell them that the Scripture alone gives the true solution of this "great phenomenon"? The plain matter of fact is, that he writes like all other infidels, who admit nothing for which they cannot find adequate "natural agents;" and when these fail them, instead of resorting to the divine word, which would often satisfy a modest inquirer, by revealing the "arm of JEHOVAH."

4. Mr. Jefferson's argument against the flood is, in substance, the very argument by which infidels have attacked the credibility of the Mosaic history. They have always objected, the insufficiency of water to effect such a deluge as that described. Mr. J. knew this, yet he adopted and repeated it. He does not deign so much as to mention Moses; while through the sides of one of his hypotheses, he strikes at the scriptural history. He winds up with pronouncing all the three to be "*equally* unsatisfactory;" thus reducing the holy volume to a level with the dreams of Voltaire! Let me ask *any* Christian, would you dare to express yourself in a similar manner, upon a subject which has received the decision of the living God? Would you patiently hear one of your neighbors speak so irreverently of his oracles? Could you venture to speculate on the deluge without resorting to them? Would you not shudder at the thought of using, in support of a philosophical opinion, the arguments which infidels bring against that WORD which is the source of all your consolation; much more to use them without a lisp of respect for it, or of caution against mistake? Can he believe the Bible who does all this? Can an infidel do more without

they shrug up their shoulders, and cry, "Ignorance is preferable to error."*

* Notes on Virginia, p. 42.

directly assailing it? What then must you think of Mr. Jefferson?

But it was not enough for this gentleman to discredit the story of the deluge. He has advanced a step farther, and has indicated too plainly, his disbelief in the common origin of mankind. The Scriptures teach that all nations are the offspring of the first and single pair, Adam and Eve, whom God created and placed in paradise. This fact, interwoven with all the relations and all the doctrines of the Bible, is alike essential to its historical and religious truth. Now, what says the candidate for the chair of your president? After an ingenious, lengthy, and elaborate argument to *prove* that the blacks are naturally and morally inferior both to white and red men; and that "their inferiority is not the effect merely of their condition of life,"* he observes, "I advance it, therefore, as a suspicion only, that the blacks, whether *ORIGINALLY a distinct race, or MADE DISTINCT by time and circumstances*, are inferior to the whites in the endowments both of body and mind."† He had before asserted, that, "besides those of color, figure, and hair, there are *other physical distinctions, proving A DIFFERENCE OF RACE.*"‡ He does, indeed, discover some compunction in reflecting on the consequences of his philosophy. For to several reasons why his opinion "must be

* Notes on Virginia, p. 205. † Ib. 209. ‡ Ib. 201.

hazarded with great diffidence," he adds, "as a circumstance of great tenderness," that the "conclusion" to which his observations lead, "would *degrade a whole race of men from the rank in the scale of beings which their Creator may PERHAPS have given them.*"* Much pains have been taken to persuade the public that Mr. Jefferson, by "distinct race" and "difference of race," means nothing more than that the negroes are only a branch of the great family of man, without impeaching the identity of their origin. This construction, though it may satisfy many, is unfounded, absurd, and contradicted by Mr. Jefferson himself. Unfounded; for when philosophers treat of men as a "subject of natural history," they use the term "race" to express the *stock* from which the particular families spring, and not, as in the popular sense, the families themselves, without regard to their original. A single example—embracing the opinions of two philosophers, of whom the one, M. de Buffon, maintained, and the other, Lord Kames, denied the common origin of mankind—will prove my assertion.

"M. Buffon, from the rule that animals which can procreate together, and whose progeny can also procreate, are of one species, concludes that all men are of one *race* or species."† Mr. Jefferson, writing on the same subject with these authors, and

* Notes on Virginia, p. 203.

† Kames' Sketches, Vol. i. p. 24.

arguing on the same side with one of them, undoubtedly used the term "*race*" in the same sense. And as the other construction is unfounded, it is also absurd; for it represents him as laboring through nearly a dozen pages to prove what no man ever thought of doubting, and what a glance of the eye sufficiently ascertains, viz., that the blacks and whites are different branches of a common family. Mr. Jefferson is not such a trifler: he fills his pages with more important matter, and with deeper sense. And by expressions which cut off evasion, contradicts the meaning which his friends have invented for him. He enumerates a variety of "distinctions which *prove a difference of race.*" These distinctions, he alleges, are not accidental, but "*physical,*" i. e., founded in *nature*. True, alarmed at the boldness of his own doctrine, he retreats a little. His PROOFS evaporate into a SUSPICION; but that suspicion is at a loss to suspect whether the inferiority of the blacks (mark it well, reader!) is owing to their being "*ORIGINALLY a distinct race, or made distinct by time and circumstances.*" Branches of the *same stock* ORIGINALLY distinct, is a contradiction. Mr. Jefferson therefore means, by different races, men descended from different stocks. His very "*tenderness*" is tintured with an infidel hue. A conclusion, corresponding with his speculations, affects him, because it "*would degrade a whole race of men from the rank in the scale of beings which*

their Creator may perhaps have given them." So, then, the secret is out! What RANK *in the scale of beings* have we, obeying the Scripture, been accustomed to assign to the injured blacks? The very same with ourselves, viz., that of children of one common father. But if Mr. Jefferson's notions be just, he says they will be *degraded* from that rank; i. e., will appear not to be children of the same father with us, but of another and inferior stock. But though he will not speak peremptorily, he strongly insinuates that he does not adopt, as an article of his philosophy, the descent of the blacks as well as the whites from that pair which came immediately from the hands of God. He is not sure. At best, it is a *doubt* with him—"the rank which their Creator may PERHAPS have given them!" Now, how will all this accord with revealed truth? God, says the apostle Paul, "*hath made of ONE BLOOD ALL NATIONS of men, for to dwell on ALL the face of the earth.*"* *Perhaps* it may be so, replies Mr. Jefferson; but there are, notwithstanding, *physical distinctions* PROVING a difference of race. I cannot repress my indignation! That a miserable, sinful worm, like myself, should proudly set up his "proofs" against the truth of my God and your God, and scout his veracity with a sceptical PERHAPS! I intreat Christians to consider the sweeping extent of this infidel doctrine of "different races." If it be true, the history of the Bible, which knows of

* Acts xvii. 26.

but *one*, is a string of falsehoods, from the book of Genesis to that of the Revelation ; and the whole system of redemption, predicated on the unity of the human race, is a cruel fiction. I ask, Christians, again, whether they would dare to speak and write on this subject in the style of Mr. Jefferson ? Whether any believer in the word of the Lord Jesus, who is their hope, could entertain such doubts ? Whether a writer, acute, cautious, and profound, like Mr. Jefferson, could, as he had before done in the case of the deluge, pursue a train of argument which he knew infidels before him had used to discredit revelation, and on which they still have great reliance ? Whether, instead of vindicating the honor of the Scripture, he could, in *such* circumstances, be as mute as death on this point ; countenancing infidels by enforcing their sentiments ; and yet be a Christian ? The thing is impossible ! And were any other than Mr. Jefferson to be guilty of the same disrespect to God's word, you would not hesitate one moment in pronouncing him an infidel.

It is not only with his philosophical disquisitions that Mr. Jefferson mingles opinions irreconcilable with the Scriptures. He even goes out of his way for the sake of a fling at them. "Those," says he, "who labor in the earth, are the chosen people of God, IF EVER HE HAD A CHOSEN PEOPLE,

whose breasts he has made his *peculiar* deposit for substantial and genuine virtue.”*

How does a Christian ear relish this “profane babbling”? In the first place, Mr. Jefferson doubts if ever God had a chosen people. In the second place, if he had, he insists they are no other than those who labor in the earth. At any rate, he denies this privilege to the seed of Abraham; and equally denies your being his people, unless you follow the scythe and the plow. Now, whether this be not the lie direct to the whole testimony of the Bible, from the beginning to the end, judge ye.†

* Notes on Virginia, p. 240.

† Some have been vain enough to suppose that they destroy this proof of Mr. Jefferson’s infidelity, by representing his expression, “the chosen people of God, if ever he had a chosen people,” as synonymous with the following: “A. B. is an honest man, if ever there was an honest man,” which is so far from doubting the existence of honest men, that it founds, in the certainty of this fact, the assertion of A. B.’s honesty. On this wretched sophism, unworthy of good sense, and unworthy of candor, I remark:

1. That the expressions are by no means similar. The whole world admits that there are honest men, which makes the proposition, “A. B. is an honest man, if ever there was an honest man,” a strong assertion of A. B.’s honesty. But the hundredth part of the world does not admit that God had a chosen people, and therefore the proposition that “those who labor in the earth are the chosen people of God, if ever he had a chosen people,” is, upon this construction, no assertion at all that the cultivators of the soil are his people, because there are millions who do not believe the fact on which it must be founded: viz. that he *had* a chosen people.

2. That if the expressions were parallel, Mr. J. would still be left

After these affronts to the oracles of God, you have no right to be surprised if Mr. Jefferson should preach the innocence of error, or even of Atheism. What do I say! He *does* preach it. "The legitimate powers of government," they are his own words, "extend to such acts only as are injurious to others. *But it does me no injury for my neighbors to say there are twenty gods, or no god. It neither picks my pocket, nor breaks my leg.*"*

Ponder well this paragraph. Ten thousand impieties and mischiefs lurk in its womb. Mr. Jefferson maintains not only the inviolability of *opinion*, but of *opinion propagated*. And that no class or character of abomination might be excluded from the sanctuary of such laws as he wishes to see established, he pleads for the impunity of published error in its most dangerous and execrable form. Polytheism, or Atheism, "twenty gods or no god," is perfectly indifferent in Mr. Jefferson's good citizen. A wretch may trumpet Atheism from New Hampshire to Georgia; may laugh at all the realites of futurity; may scoff and teach others to scoff at their accountability; it is no

in the lurch, because the first asserts A. B. to be as much an honest man as any man that ever lived; and so Mr. J. asserts "those who labor in the earth" to be as much the "chosen people of God" as any people that ever lived. This is still the lie direct to the whole Bible, and the inventors of this lucky shift must set their wits at work to invent another.

* Notes on Virginia, p. 231.

matter, says Mr. Jefferson, "it neither picks my pocket, nor breaks my leg." This is nothing less than representing civil society as founded in Atheism. For there can be no religion without God. And if it does me or my neighbor no injury, to subvert the very foundation of religion, by denying the being of God, then religion is not one of the constituent principles of society, and consequently society is perfect without it; that is, is perfect in Atheism. Christians! what think you of this doctrine? Have you so learned Christ or truth? Is Atheism indeed no injury to society? Is it no injury to untie all the cords which bind you to the God of heaven, and your deeds to his throne of Judgment; which form the strength of personal virtue, give energy to the duties, and infuse sweetness into the charities of human life? Is it indeed no injury to you, or to those around you, that your neighbor buries his conscience and all his sense of moral obligation, in the gulf of Atheism? Is it no injury to you that the oath ceases to be sacred? That the eye of the Omniscient no more pervades the abode of crime? That you have no hold on your dearest friend, farther than the law is able to reach his person? Have you yet to learn that the peace and happiness of society, depend upon things which the laws of men can never embrace? And whence, I pray you, are righteous laws to emanate, if rulers,

by adopting Atheism, be freed from the coercion of future retribution? Would you not rather be scourged with sword, and famine, and pestilence, than see your country converted into a den of Atheism? Yet, says Mr. Jefferson, it is a harmless thing. "It does me no injury; it neither picks my pocket, nor breaks my leg." This is perfectly of a piece with his favorite wish, to see a government administered without any religious principle among either rulers or ruled. Pardon me, Christian; this is the morality of devils, which would break in an instant every link in the chain of human friendship, and transform the globe into one equal scene of desolation and horror, where fiend would prowl with fiend for plunder and blood; yet Atheism "neither picks my pocket, nor breaks my leg." I will not abuse you by asking whether the author of such an opinion can be a Christian? or whether he has any regard for the Scriptures, which confine all wisdom and blessedness and glory, both personal and social, to the fear and the favor of God?

The reader will observe, that in his sentiments on these four points, the *deluge*; the *origin of nations*; the *chosen people of God*; and *Atheism*, Mr. Jefferson has comprised the radical principles of infidelity in its utmost latitude. Accede to his positions on these, and he will compel you to grant the rest. There is hardly a single truth of

revelation, which would not fall before one or other of them. If the deluge be abandoned, you can defend neither the miracles nor inspiration of the Scripture. If men are not descendants of one common stock, the doctrine of salvation is convicted of essential error. If God never had any chosen people but the cultivators of the soil, the fabric of the New Testament falls to the ground; for its foundation in the choice of Israel to be his peculiar people, is swept away. And if the Atheism of one man be not injurious to another, society could easily dispense, not only with his word, but with his worship.

Conformable with the infidelity of his book, is an expression of Mr. Jefferson contained in a paragraph which I transcribe from the pamphlet entitled "*Serious Considerations,*" &c.

"When the late Rev. Dr. John B. Smith, resided in Virginia, the famous MAZZEI happened one night to be his guest. Dr. Smith having, as usual, assembled his family for their evening devotions, the circumstance occasioned some discourse on religion, in which the Italian made no secret of his infidel principles. In the course of conversation, he remarked to Dr. Smith, 'Why your great philosopher and statesman, Mr. Jefferson, is rather farther gone in infidelity than I am;' and related in confirmation, the following anecdote: 'That as he was once riding with Mr. Jefferson, he ex-

pressed his 'surprise that the people of this country take no better care of their public buildings.' 'What buildings?' exclaimed Mr. Jefferson. 'Is not that a church?' replied he, pointing to a decayed edifice. 'Yes,' answered Mr. Jefferson. 'I am astonished,' said the other, 'that they permit it to be in so ruinous a condition.' '*It is good enough,*' rejoined Mr. Jefferson, '*for him that was born in a manger*'!! Such a contemptuous fling at the blessed Jesus, could issue from the lips of no other than a deadly foe to his name and his cause."*

Some of Mr. Jefferson's friends have been desperate enough to challenge this anecdote as a calumny fabricated for electioneering purposes. But whatever they pretend, it is incontestibly true, that the story was told, as here repeated, by Dr. Smith. I, as well as the author of "*Serious Considerations*," and several others, heard it from the lips of Dr. Smith, years ago, and more than once. The calumny, if any, lies either with those who impeach the veracity of a number of respectable witnesses, or with MAZZEI himself. And there are not wanting, among the followers of Mr. Jefferson, advocates for this latter opinion. He must have been a wretch indeed, to blacken his brother philosopher, by trumping up a deliberate lie, in order to excuse his own impiety in the

* *Serious Considerations*, pp. 16, 17.

presence of a minister of Christ! If such was MAZZEI, the philosopher, it is our wisdom to think, and think again, before we heap our largest honors upon the head of his *bosom-friend*.

Christian Reader, the facts and reasonings which I have laid before you, produce in my mind an irresistible conviction, that Mr. Jefferson is a confirmed infidel; and I cannot see how they should have a less effect on yours. But when to these you add his solicitude for wresting the Bible from the hands of your children—his notoriously unchristian character—his disregard to all the ordinances of divine worship—his utter and open contempt of the Lord's Day, insomuch as to receive on it a public entertainment;* every trace of doubt must vanish. What is a man who writes against the truths of God's Word? who makes not even a *profession* of Christianity? who is without Sabbaths; without the sanctuary; without so much as a decent external respect for the faith and the worship of Christians? What is he, what *can he be*, but a decided, a hardened infidel?

Several feeble and fruitless attempts have been made to fritter down and dissipate this mass of evidence. In vain are we told that Mr. Jefferson's conduct is modest, moral, exemplary. I ask no odious questions. A man must be an adept in

* At Fredericksburgh, in Virginia, in 1798.

the higher orders of profligacy, if neither literary occupation, nor the influence of the surrounding gospel, can form or control his habits. Though infidelity and licentiousness are twin sisters, they are not compelled to be always in company; that I am not a *debauchee*, will therefore be hardly admitted as proof that I am not an *infidel*. In vain are we reminded, that the "Notes on Virginia" contain familiar mention, and respectful acknowledgment, of the being and attributes of God. Though infidelity leads to Atheism, a man may be an infidel without being an Atheist. Some have even pretended, that anxiety for the honor of God, prompted them to fix the brand of imposture upon the Scripture! But where has Mr. Jefferson, when stating his *private opinions*, betrayed the least regard for the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ? In vain is it proclaimed, that he maintains a Christian minister at his own expense. I shall not inquire whether that maintenance does or does not arise from the product of glebe lands attached to many southern estates. Taking the fact to be simply as related, I *will* inquire whether prudent and political men never contribute to the support of Christianity from *other* motives than a belief of its truth? Mr. Jefferson may do all this, and yet be an infidel. VOLTAIRE, the vile, the blasphemous VOLTAIRE, was building churches, and assisting at the mass, while he was writing to

his *philosophical* confidants, concerning your divine Saviour, CRUSH THE WRETCH! In vain is the "ACT *for establishing religious freedom*," which flowed from the pen of Mr. Jefferson, and passed in the Assembly of Virginia, in 1786, paraded as the triumph of his Christian creed. I protest against the credibility of the witness! That act, I know, recognizes "the Holy Author of our religion," as "Lord both of body and mind," and possessing "Almighty power;" and by censuring "fallible and uninspired men," tacitly acknowledges both the inspiration and infallibility of the sacred writers. But Mr. Jefferson is not here declaring his *private opinions*: for these we must look to his Notes, which were published *a year after*, and abound with ideas which contradict the authority of the Scriptures. He speaks, in that act, as the organ of an *Assembly* PROFESSING CHRISTIANITY; and it would not only have been a monstrous absurdity, but more than his credit, and the Assembly's too, was worth, to have been disrespectful, *in an official deed*, to that Redeemer whose name they owned, and who was precious to many of their constituents. *Such* Christianity is common with the bitterest enemies of Christ. Herbert, Hobbes, Blount, Toland, Tindal, Bolingbroke, Hume, Voltaire, Gibbon, at the very moment when they were laboring to argue or to laugh the gospel out of the world, affected great

regard for our "holy religion" and its divine author. There is an edict of Frederic II. of Prussia, on the subject of religious toleration, couched in terms of the utmost reverence for the Christian religion, and yet this same Frederic was one of the knot of conspirators, who, with Voltaire at their head, plotted the extermination of Christianity: and whenever they spoke of its "Holy Author," echoed to each other, *Crush the wretch!* This *act*, therefore, proves nothing but that, at the time of its passing, (we hope it is so still,) there was religion enough in Virginia to curb the proud spirit of infidelity.

CHRISTIANS! Lay these things together: compare them; examine them separately, and collectively; ponder; pause; lay your hands upon your hearts; lift up your hearts to heaven, and pronounce on Mr. Jefferson's Christianity. You cannot stifle your emotions; nor forbear uttering your indignant sentence—INFIDEL!!

This point being settled, one would think that you could have no difficulty about the rest, and would instantly and firmly conclude, "Such a man ought not, and, as far as depends on me, shall not, be President of the United States!" But I calculate too confidently. I have the humiliation to hear this inference controverted even by those whose "good confession" was a pledge that they are feelingly alive to the honor of their Re-

deemer. No, I am not deceived : they are *Christian* lips which plead that "*Religion has nothing to do with politics*"—that *to refuse our suffrages on account of religious principles, would be an interference with the right of conscience—that there is little hope of procuring a real believer, and we had better choose an infidel than a hypocrite.*

That religion has, in *fact*, nothing to do with the politics of many who profess it, is a melancholy truth. But that it has, of *right*, no concern with political transactions, is quite a new discovery. If such opinions, however, prevail, there is no longer any mystery in the character of those whose conduct, in political matters, violates every precept, and slanders every principle, of the religion of Christ. But what is politics ? Is it not the science and the exercise of civil rights and civil duties ? And what is religion ? Is it not an obligation to the service of God, founded on his authority, and extending to all our relations, personal and social ? Yet *religion has nothing to do with politics !* Where did you learn this maxim ? The Bible is full of directions for your behavior as *citizens*. It is plain, pointed, awful in its injunctions on rulers and ruled *as such* : yet *religion has nothing to do with politics*. You are commanded "*in ALL your ways to acknowledge him.*"* "*In EVERYTHING, by prayer and supplication, with*

* Prov. iii. 3.

thanksgiving, to let your requests be made known unto God."* "And WHATSOEVER YE DO, IN WORD OR DEED, to do ALL IN THE NAME of the Lord Jesus."† Yet religion has nothing to do with politics! Most astonishing! And is there any part of your conduct in which you are, or wish to be, without law to God, and not under the law of Christ? Can you persuade yourselves that political men and measures are to undergo no review in the judgment to come? That all the passion and violence, the fraud, and falsehood and corruption, which pervade the system of party, and burst out like a flood at the public elections, are to be blotted from the catalogue of unchristian deeds, because they are politics? Or that a minister of the gospel may see his people, in their political career, bid defiance to their God in breaking through every moral restraint, and keep a guiltless silence, because religion has nothing to do with politics? I forbear to press the argument farther; observing only, that many of our difficulties and sins may be traced to this pernicious notion. Yes, if our religion had had more to do with our politics; if, in the pride of our citizenship, we had not forgotten our Christianity: if we had prayed more and wrangled less about the affairs of our country, it would have been infinitely better for us at this day.

* Phil. iv. 6.

† Col. iii. 17.

But you are afraid, that to refuse a man your suffrages because he is an infidel, would *interfere with the rights of conscience*. This is a most singular scruple, and proves how wild are the opinions of men on the subject of liberty. Conscience is God's officer in the human breast, and its rights are defined by his law. The right of conscience to trample on his authority is the right of a rebel, which entitles him to nothing but condign punishment. You are afraid of being unkind to the conscience of an *infidel*. Dismiss your fears. It is the last grievance of which he will complain. How far do you suppose Mr. Jefferson consulted his *conscience* when he was vilifying the divine word, and preaching insurrection against God, by preaching the harmlessness of Atheism? But supposing Mr. Jefferson to be conscientiously impious, this would only be a stronger reason for our opposition. For the more conscientious a man is, the more persevering will he be in his views, and the more anxious for their propagation. If he be fixed, then, in dangerous error, faithfulness to God and truth requires us to resist him and his conscience too; and to keep from him the means of doing mischief. If a man thought himself bound in conscience, whenever he should be able, to banish God's Sabbath, burn his churches, and hang his worshippers, would you entrust him with power out of respect to conscience? I trow not. And

why you should judge differently in the case of an infidel, who spurns at what is dearer to you than life, I cannot conceive. But in your solicitude for the conscience of Mr. Jefferson, have you considered, in the meantime, what becomes of your *own* conscience? Has it no rights? no voice? no influence? Are you not to keep it void of offence towards God? Can you do this in elevating his open enemies to the highest dignity of your country? Beware, therefore, lest an ill-directed care for the conscience of another, bring your own under the lashes of remorse. Keep this clear, by the word of God, and there is little hazard of injuring your neighbor's. But how can you interfere with any man's conscience by refusing him a political office? You do not invade the sanctuary of his bosom: you impose on him no creed; you simply tell him you do not like him, or that you prefer another to him. Do you injure him by this? Do you not merely exercise the right of a citizen and a Christian? It belongs essentially to the freedom of election, to refuse my vote to any candidate for reasons of conscience, of state, of predilection, or for no reason at all but my own choice. The rights of conscience, on his part, are out of the question. He proposes himself for my approbation. If I approve, I give him my support. If not, I withhold it. His conscience has nothing to do with my motives; but to my *own* conscience they

are serious things. If he be an infidel, I will not compel him to profess Christianity. Let him retain his infidelity, enjoy all its comforts, and meet all its consequences. But I have an unquestionable right to say, "I cannot trust a man of such principles: on what grounds he has adopted them is not my concern; nor will his personal sincerity alter their tendency. While he is an infidel he shall never have my countenance. Let him stay where he is; and let his conscience be its own reward." I could not blame another for such conduct to me; for he only makes an independent use of his privilege, which does me no injury; nor am I to be blamed for such conduct to another, for I only make the same use of my privilege, which is no injury to him. Mr. Jefferson's conscience cannot, therefore, be wronged, if you exclude him from the presidency, because he is an infidel; and your own, by an act of such Christian magnanimity, may escape hereafter many a bitter pang. For if you elect Mr. Jefferson, though an infidel, from a regard to what you consider the rights of conscience, you must, in order to be consistent, *carry your principle through*. If infidelity is not a valid objection to a candidate for the presidency, it cannot be so to a candidate for any other office. You must never again say, "We will not vote for such a man, because he is an infidel." The evil brotherhood will turn upon you with your own doctrine of the "rights of con-

science." You must, then, either retract, or be content to see every office filled with infidels. How horrible, in such an event, would be the situation of your country! How deep your agony under the torments of self-reproach!

But there is no prospect, you say, of obtaining a real Christian, and we had *better choose an infidel than a hypocrite*. By no means. Supposing that a man professes Christianity, and evinces in his general deportment a regard for its doctrines, its worship, and its laws; though he be rotten at heart, he is infinitely preferable to a known infidel. His hypocrisy is before God; but, while it is without detection, can do no hurt to men. We have a hold of him, which it is impossible to get of an infidel. His reputation, his habits, his interests, depending upon the belief of his Christianity, are sureties for his behavior, to which we vainly look for a counterbalance in an infidel; and they are, next to religion itself, the strongest sureties of man to man. His very hypocrisy is an homage to the gospel. The whole weight of his example is on the side of Christianity, while that of an infidel is wholly against it. It is well known that the attendance of your Washington and of President Adams upon public worship, gave the ordinances of the gospel a respectability in the eyes of many which otherwise they would not have had: brought a train of thoughtless people within the reach of

the means of salvation ; and thus strengthened the opposition of Christians to the progress of infidelity. You can never forget the honorable testimony which Mr. Adams bore, in one of his proclamations, to a number of the most precious truths of Revelation ; nor how he was abused and ridiculed for it, by not a few of those very persons who now strive to persuade you that Mr. Jefferson is a Christian. In short, your President, if an open infidel, will be a centre of contagion to the whole continent. If a professed Christian, he will honor the institutions of God ; and though his hypocrisy, should he prove a hypocrite, may be a fire to consume his own vitals, it cannot become a wide-spreading conflagration.

Can you still hesitate ? Perhaps you may. I therefore bespeak your attention to a few plain and cogent reasons, why you cannot, without violating your plighted faith, and trampling on your most sacred duties, place an infidel at the head of your government.

1. The civil magistrate is *God's officer*. *He is the minister of God*, saith Paul, *to thee for good*.* Consequently his first and highest obligation is, to cherish in his mind and express in his conduct, his sense of obedience to the Governor of the Universe. *He that ruleth over man must be just, ruling in THE FEAR OF GOD.*† The Scriptures

* Rom. xiii. 4.

† Ps. xv. 4.

have left you this and similar declarations, to direct you in the choice of your magistrates. And you are bound, upon your allegiance to the God of the Scriptures, to look out for such men as answer the description; and if, unhappily, they are not to be had, for such as come nearest to it. The good man, he who shall “dwell in God’s holy hill,” is one “in whose eyes a vile person is contemned; but he HONORETH *them that fear the Lord.*”* But can you pretend to regard this principle, when you desire to raise an infidel to the most important post in your country? Do you call this *honoring them that fear God*? Nay, it is honoring them who do *not* fear God: that is, according to the scriptural contrast, honoring a *vile person*, whom, as Christians, you ought to *contemn*. And have you the smallest expectation that one who despises the word and worship of God; who has openly taught the harmlessness of rebellion against his government and being, by teaching that Atheism is no injury to society, will, nevertheless, *rule in his fear*? Will it show any reverence or love to your Father in Heaven, to put a distinguishing mark of your confidence upon his sworn foe? Or will it be an affront to his majesty?

2. The civil magistrate is, by divine appointment, *the guardian of the Sabbath*. In it thou shalt not do any work; thou, nor thy son, &c., nor

* 2 Sam. xxiii. 3.

THE STRANGER THAT IS WITHIN THY GATES.*
“Gates,” is a Scriptural term for public authority, and that it is so to be understood in this commandment, is evident from its connection with “*stranger*.” God says that even the stranger shall not be allowed to profane his Sabbath. But the stranger can be controlled only by the civil magistrate, who “sitteth in the gate.”† It therefore belongs to his office, to enforce, by lawful means, the sanctification of the Sabbath, as the fundamental institute of religion and morals, and the social expression of homage to that God under whom he acts. The least which can be accepted from him, is to recommend it by personal observance. How do you suppose Mr. Jefferson will perform this part of his duty? or how can you deposit in his hands a trust, which you cannot but think he will betray; and in betraying which, he will not only sacrifice some of your most invaluable interests, but as *your* organ and in *your* name lift up his heel against the God of Heaven? In different states, you have made, not long since, spirited exertions to hinder the profanation of your Lord’s day. For this purpose, many of you endeavored to procure religious magistrates for this city, and religious representatives in the councils of the state. You well remember how you were mocked, traduced, execrated, especially by the

* Ex. xx. 10.

† Dan. ii. 49.

infidel tribe. But what is now become of your zeal and your consistency? I can read in the list of delegates to the Legislature, the names of men who have been an ornament to the gospel, and acquitted themselves like Christians in that noble struggle, and yet are expected to ballot for electors, whose votes shall be given to an infidel President. Who hath bewitched you, Christians? or, what do you mean by siding with the infidels to lift into the chair of state, a man more eminent for nothing than for his scorn of the day, the ordinances, and the worship of your Redeemer; and who did not blush to make it, in the face of the sun, a season of frolic and revel? * Is this your kindness to your friend?

3 *The church of God has ever accounted it a great mercy to have civil rulers professing his name.* Rather than yield it, thousands of your fathers have poured out their blood. This privilege is now in your hands; and it is the chief circumstance which makes the freedom of election worth a Christian's care. Will you, dare you, abuse it, by prostituting it to the aggrandizement of an enemy to your Lord and his Christ? If you do, will it not be a righteous thing with God to take the privilege from you altogether; and in his wrath to subject you, and your children, and

* The Fredericksburgh feast, given on Sabbath, to Mr. J. 1798.

your children's children, to such rulers as you have, by your own deed, preferred ?

4. You are commanded *to pray for your rulers* : it is your custom to pray, that they may be men *fearing God and hating coveteousness*. You entreat him to fulfil his promise, that *kings shall be to his church nursing-fathers, and queens her nursing-mothers*.* With what conscience can you lift up your hands in such a supplication, when you are exerting yourselves to procure a President, who you know does not fear God ; i. e. one exactly the *reverse* of the man you ask him to bestow ? And when, by this act, you do all in your power *to defeat* the promise of which you affect to wish the fulfilment ? Do you think that the church of Christ is to be nurtured by the dragon's milk of infidelity ? Or that the contradiction between your prayers and your practice does not mock the holy God ?

5. There are circumstances in the state of your country which impart to these reflections, applicable in their spirit to all Christians, a double emphasis in their application to you.

The Federal Constitution *makes no acknowledgment of that God* who gave us our national existence, and saved us from anarchy and internal war. This neglect has excited in many of its best friends, more alarm than all other difficulties.

* Isaiah xlix. 23.

The only way to wipe off the reproach of irreligion, and to avert the descending vengeance, is to prove, by our *national acts*, that the Constitution has not, in this instance, done justice to the public sentiment. But if you appoint an infidel for your President, and *such* an infidel as Mr. Jefferson, you will sanction that neglect, you will declare, by a *solemn national act*, that there is no more religion in your collective character, than in your written Constitution : you will put a *national indignity* upon the God of your mercies ; and provoke him, it may be, to send over your land that deluge of judgments which his forbearance has hitherto suspended.

Add to this the consideration, that *infidelity has awfully increased*. The time was, and that within your own recollection, when the term infidelity was almost a stranger to our ears, and an open infidel an object of abhorrence. But *now* the term has become familiar, and infidels hardly disgust. Our youth, our hope and our pride, are poisoned with the accursed leaven. The vain title of “ philosopher ” has turned their giddy heads, and, what is worse, corrupted their untutored hearts. It is now a mark of sense, the proof of an enlarged and liberal mind, to scoff at all the truths of inspiration, and to cover with ridicule the hope of a Christian ; those truths and that hope which are the richest boon of divine benignity ; which calm

the perturbed conscience, and heal the wounded spirit; which sweeten every comfort, and soothe every sorrow; which give strong consolation in the arrest of death, and shed the light of immortality on the gloom of the grave. All, all are become the sneer of the buffoon, and the song of the drunkard. These things, Christians, you deplore. You feel indignant, as well as discouraged, at the inroads of infidel principle and profligate manners. You declaim against them. You caution your children against their infection. And yet, with such facts before your eyes, and such lessons in your mouths, you are on the point of undoing whatever you have done; and annihilating at one blow the effect of all your profession, instruction, and example. By giving your support to Mr. Jefferson, you are about to strip infidelity of its ignominy; array it in honors; and hold it up with eclat to the view of the rising generation. By this act, you will proclaim to the whole world that it is not so detestable a thing as you pretended; that you do not believe it subversive of moral obligation and social purity; that a man may revile your religion, and blaspheme your Saviour, and yet command your highest confidence. This amounts to nothing less than a deliberate surrender of the cause of Jesus Christ into the hands of his enemies. By this single act—my flesh trembles, my blood chills at the thought!—by this

single act you will do more to destroy a regard for the gospel of Jesus, than the whole fraternity of infidels with all their arts, their industry, and their intrigue. You will stamp credit upon principles, the native tendency of which is to ruin your children in this world, and damn them in the world to come. O God! "the ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but thy people doth not know, and Israel doth not consider."*

With these serious reflections, let me connect a fact equally serious: *The whole strength of open and active infidelity is on the side of Mr. Jefferson.*

You may well start! But the observation and experience of the continent is one long and loud attestation to the truth of my assertion. I say OPEN and ACTIVE infidelity. You can scarcely find one exception among all who preach infidel tenets among the people. Did it never occur to you, that such men would not be so zealous for Mr. Jefferson if they were not well assured of his being one of themselves—that they would cordially hate him if they supposed him to be a Christian—or that they have the most sanguine hope that his election to the presidency will promote their cause? I know, that to serve the purpose of the moment, those very presses which teemed with abuse of your Redeemer are now affecting to offer incense

* Is. i. 3.

to his religion ; and that Deists themselves are laboring to convince you that Mr. Jefferson is a Christian ; and yet have the effrontery to talk of other men's *hypocrisy* ! Can you be the dupes of such an artifice ? Do you not see in it a proof that there is no reliance to be placed on an infidel conscience ? Do you need to be reminded that these infidels who now court you, are the very men who, four years ago, insulted your faith and your Lord with every expression of ridicule and contempt ? That these very men circulated, with unremitting assiduity, that execrable book of Boulanger, entitled *Christianity Unveiled* ; and that equally execrable abortion of Thomas Paine, *The Age of Reason* ? That, in order to get them, (especially the latter) into the hands of the common people, they sold them at a very low rate ; gave them away where they could not sell them ; and slipped them into the pockets of numbers who refused to accept them ? Do you know that some of these infidels were at the trouble of translating from the French, and printing, for the benefit of Americans, a work of downright, undisguised Atheism, with the imposing title of *Common Sense* ? That it was openly advertised, and extracts, or an extract, published to help the sale !* Do you know

* The title is a trick, designed to entrap the unwary, by palming it on them through the popularity of Paine's tracts under the same name. The title in the original, is *Le bon sens*, GOOD SENSE. It was

that some of the same brotherhood are secretly handing about, I need not say where, a book written by Charles Pigott, an Englishman, entitled *A Political Dictionary?* Take the following sample of its impiety: (my hair stiffens while I transcribe it.) “*Religion*—a superstition invented by the archbishop of hell, and propagated by his faithful diocesans the clergy, to keep the people in ignorance and darkness, that they may not see the work of iniquity that is going on,” &c.*

Such are the men with whom professors of the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, are concerting the election of an *infidel* to the Presidency of the United States of America. Hear the word of the Lord: “What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? And what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?”† Yet Christians are

printed, I believe, in Philadelphia; but the printer was ashamed or afraid to own it.

* Pigott’s *Political Dictionary*, p. 132. This work was originally printed in England; but having been suppressed there, the whole or nearly the whole impression, was sent over to America, and distributed among the people. But in *what manner*, and by *what means*, there are some who can tell better than the writer of this pamphlet. It was thought, however, to be so useful, as to merit the honors of the American press—for the copy which I possess is one of an edition printed at New York, for THOMAS GREENLEAF, late editor of the *Argus*, 1796.

† 2 Cor. v. 14, 15.

uniting with infidels, in exalting an infidel to the chief magistracy! If he succeeds, Christians must bear the blame. Numerous as the infidels are, they are not yet able, adored be God, to seize upon our "high places." Christians must help them, or they set not their feet on the threshold of power. If, therefore, an infidel preside over our country, it will be *your* fault, Christians, and *your* act; and you shall answer it! And for aiding and abetting such a design, I charge upon your consciences the sin of striking hands in a covenant of friendship, with the enemies of your Master's glory. Ah, what will be your compunctions, when these same infidels, victorious through *your* assistance, will "tread you down as mire in the streets," and exult in their triumph over bigots and bigotry?

Sit down, now, and interrogate your own hearts, whether you can, with a "pure conscience," befriend Mr. Jefferson's election? Whether you can do it *in the name of the Lord Jesus*? Whether you can lift up your heads, and tell him that the choice of this infidel is for his honor, and that you promote it in the faith of his approbation? Whether, in the event of success, you have a right to look for his blessing in the enjoyment of your President? Whether, having preferred the talents of a man before the religion of Jesus, you ought not to fear that God will blast these talents; abandon your President to infatuated counsels;

and yourselves to the plague of your own folly? Whether it would not be just to remove the restraints of his good providence, and scourge you with that very infidelity which you did not scruple to countenance? Whether you can, without some guilty misgivings, pray for the spirit of Christ upon a President, whom you choose in spite of every demonstration of his hatred to Christ? Those who, to keep their consciences clean, oppose Mr. Jefferson, may pray for him, in this manner, with a full and fervent heart. But to you, God may administer this dread rebuke: "*You chose an infidel: keep him as ye chose him; walk in the sparks that ye have kindled.*" Whether the threatenings of God are not pointed against such a magistrate and such a people? "Be wise, O ye kings," is his commandment; "be instructed, ye judges of the earth: serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling: KISS THE SON, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way when his anger is kindled but a little."* What, then, is in store for a magistrate who is so far from "kissing the Son," that he hates and opposes him? "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the NATIONS that FORGET God."† And who forget him, if not a nation which, though called by his name, nevertheless caresses, honors, rewards his enemies? The Lord hath sworn to strike *through kings in the day of his wrath.*‡ Woe

* Ps. ii. 10-12.

† Ps. ix. 17.

‡ Ps. cx. 5.

then, to those governments which are wielded by infidels, when he arises to judgment; and woe to those who have contributed to establish them! To whatever influence they owe their determinations and their measures, it is not to the "Spirit of understanding, and of the fear of the Lord." Do I speak these things as a man; or saith not the Scripture the same also? "Woe to the rebellious children, saith the Lord, that take *counsel, but not of me*, and that cover with a covering, *but not of my Spirit*, that they may add sin to sin. That walk to go down into Egypt (*and have not asked at my mouth*) to strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh, and to trust in the shadow of Egypt. Therefore the strength of Egypt shall be your *shame*, and the *trust in the shadow of Egypt* your *CONFUSION*."* This is the light in which God considers your confidence in his enemies; and the issue for which you ought to be prepared.

I have done; and do not flatter myself that I shall escape the censure of many professed, and of some real Christians. The style of this pamphlet is calculated to conciliate nothing but conscience. I desire to conciliate nothing else. "If I pleased men I should not be the servant of Christ." I do not expect, nor wish, to fare better than the Apostle of the Gentiles, who became the enemy of not a few professors, because he *told them the truth*.† But the

* Isa. xxx. 1-3.

† Gal iv. 16.

Bible speaks of "Children that will not hear the law of the Lord: which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things: speak unto us *smooth things*: prophecy deceits."* Here is the truth, "Whether you will hear, or whether you will forbear." If you are resolved to persevere in elevating an infidel to the chair of your President, I pray God not to "choose your delusions;" but cannot dissemble that "my flesh trembleth for fear of his judgments." It is my consolation that my feeble voice has been lifted up for His name. I have addressed you as one who believes, and I beseech you to act as those who believe, "That we must *all* appear before the judgment seat of Christ." Whatever be the result, you shall not plead that you were not warned. If, notwithstanding, you call to govern you an enemy to my Lord and your Lord; in the face of earth and heaven, and in the audience of your own consciences, I record my protest, and wash my hands of your guilt.

ARISE, O LORD, AND LET NOT MAN PREVAIL!

* Isa. xxx. 9, 10